Chronicles

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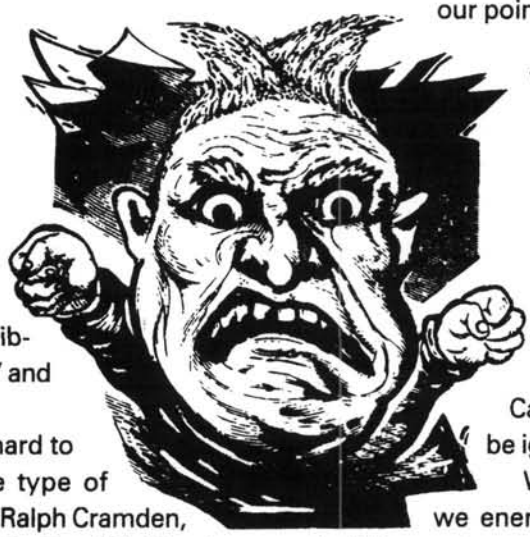
We Give Liberal Catholics **High** Blood Pressure

For the last two decades, traditional Catholicism has been ascendant, and now it's the dynamic force in the U.S. Catholic Church. Not surprisingly, greying liberal Catholics have been getting uptight and ticked off, and they've been lashing out.

For example, *Commonweal*, that elderly organ of liberal Catholicism with (according to Richard John Neuhaus) an "aging readership," recently devoted its entire back cover to an attempt to ridicule us. We are the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, a Catholic magazine of more recent vintage. The gist of the attack was that we're out of touch with "liberal post-Enlightenment culture" and are read by "ostriches."



Commonweal, straining hard to be satirical, asserted that the type of people who write for us include Ralph Cramden, Betty Crocker, and of course Rip Van Winkle; that *Road & Track* has named us "one of the ten top minivans in the American market"; and that "if the pope told Catholics they could only have sex standing on their heads every Tuesday," we'd "look forward to Tuesdays." Gads, is *Commonweal* suffering from dizzy spells, about to have a stroke?

Earlier, *Commonweal* published a letter from a homosexual claiming we "reek of fascism." Ah, that good ole "F" word, so serviceable in the salad days of the 60s!

The *National Catholic Reporter*, always on the cutting edge of 60s nostalgia, has nonjudgmentally accused us of taking "cheap shots" and being a "poisoned dart," while letter writers in the *Reporter* have sensitively demonized us as "triumphalistic," "abusive," and "vicious."

America, the liberal Jesuit weekly, has deemed our point of view "ugly."

While Archbishop Rembert Weakland, America's #1 clerical critic of the Vatican, has called Mother Angelica "offensive," he has called *us* "extremely offensive"; His Excellency has also charged us with being "frivolous and caustic" (yes, both!).

We're delighted to be flailed at by the old warriors of liberal Catholicism. No magazine wants to be ignored — so, c'mon, hit us again! Why are we so detested? Because we energetically support traditional Catholicism and a strong papacy, and take to task those who huff and puff against them. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, we're "influential." Obviously, we're *too* influential to ignore. But there's more: We're intellectually aggressive, and we've been confronting the liberals on their eggheaded turf — and, boy, are they up in arms!

Newsweek says we're "cheeky" (we are!). Find out what the fireworks are about by subscribing to our provocative monthly magazine! After all, you don't want to be an *ostrich*, do you?

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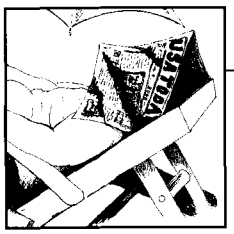
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE



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On Elian

Thomas Fleming is wrong when he writes (*Cultural Revolutions*, April) that, by Cuban law, Elian Gonzalez belongs to his next-of-kin, his father. According to Cuban law (specifically the *Codigo de Familia Ley*, No. 1289), parental authority is subordinated to "inculcating" the "internationalist spirit and socialist morality." According to Article 95, section three, of this so-called family code, government tribunals can "deprive both parents, or one of them, parental authority," when both parents fail to indoctrinate their children in communist morality. Under Cuban law, Elian has one "father" who ultimately decides what value system he will be raised in, and his name is Fidel Castro.

Secondly, Dr. Fleming is guilty of an Orwellian use of the English language. He stated that Elian's mother "died in an illegal attempt to enter the United States." One may agree or disagree with current U.S. immigration policy, but one cannot dispute that, under Lyndon Johnson's 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act, Elian's mother is given automatic residency upon reaching U.S. soil. How can her attempt to enter the United States be illegal if, upon entering, she would be granted residency a year and a day later? The Clinton administration's 1995 circumvention of the spirit of this law, without repealing it, in a migration agreement with the Castro regime is just another example of the lawlessness of the Clinton administration, not of Elian's mother. The claim that "by American law, the boy is simply an illegal alien who can either be returned to Cuba or stuck in a concentration camp" is just wrong. Under U.S. law, the child was granted humanitarian parole and was on his way to receiving residency a year and a day later before Castro's tantrum led to the INS reversing its decision.

Dr. Fleming cites the American abortion rate, declaring "it is hard to believe [Cuba] begins to approach the American level." Pax Christi sent a delegation to Cuba back in 1998 and was profoundly disturbed to report that, according to the Cuban minister of health, there is one abortion to every birth in Cuba. Pax Christi claimed that, at a "rather large nearby hospital, that we visit often, approximately thirty abortions take place daily. It is not unusual for women to be forced to have abortions. To rebel against the practice is futile."

Dr. Fleming's observation that "recent visitors to Cuba have not returned with stories of massive oppression and executions" should be placed in a larger historical context. I'd recommend that he obtain a transcript of Daniel Wolf's BBC2 documentaries, *Tourists of the Revolution*. It's amazing how visitors to some of the most brutal and murderous tyrannies of this century failed to mention mass murder and wholesale oppression. George Bernard Shaw visited the Soviet Union in 1931 and returned with stories of "an atmosphere of hope and security as has never before been seen in a civilized country on earth." Another visitor to the "worker's paradise" built by that wonderful humanitarian Stalin, Barbara Castle, then a journalist, reported "no atmosphere of repression" in pre-war Moscow, only glorious opportunities for women. Meanwhile, millions were being starved, massacred, and banished to gulags in Siberia.

There is a paradox at work in Cuba. The more foreign investment in joint partnerships with the regime, the greater the shrinkage in the Cuban private sector. Reuters reported in 1998 that "current and former members of the private sector blame the falloff on excessive state controls and taxes imposed after the introduction of some market-oriented features in 1993." This clampdown on the private sector coincided with the arrival of hard currency from European and Canadian investors. This hard currency has been used to sustain the Cuban police state. Dropping sanctions and providing U.S. credits and hard currency to prop up the regime will only earn the enmity of the Cuban people.

Reports of massive repression in Cuba have appeared in the *Economist*, in which Pedro Betancur reported on the brutal January 22 beating of human-rights activists by a government mob. Sixty-eight-year-old Gloria Gonzalez described the attack: "They hit one of my sons on the head with a stick, cutting him badly. They broke another's rib. They kicked me hard and knocked me over." Seven of the victims of the beating were

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arrested. According to the independent Human Rights and National Reconciliation Commission in Havana, almost 600 people have been temporarily detained since November, and the commission has documented 350 political prisoners. They call it the worst crackdown in a decade.

Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, a medical doctor, was fired from his job after protesting late-term abortions at a government hospital where he worked and continued to enrage the dictatorship by carrying protest signs charging the regime with being "child murderers." Dr. Biscet was sentenced to a three-year prison term for his activism. This culture of death was manifested on July 13, 1994, when agents of the regime massacred 41 men, women, and children whose sole crime was trying to flee the island. Whole families were murdered. Agents of the Castro regime destroyed the parental rights of the fathers and mothers along with their lives, and the lives of their children, without mercy. In Dr. Fleming's rush to expose the shortcomings of American domestic and foreign policy, he has committed the error of whitewashing the last Stalinist dictatorship in the Western hemisphere.

—John J. Suarez
Coordinator
Free Cuba Foundation
Miami, FL

I would like to commend Dr. Fleming for his excellent interview with Dean Koontz in the April issue. However, his editorial in *Cultural Revolutions* was wholly misguided. Accusing "conservative Republican politicians and family-values Christians" of "mischief" is the wrong approach to the Elian Gonzalez situation. While it is true that conservatives and liberals have taken positions on the issue that are the exact opposite of their usual reactions, there is good reason to explain it, and Dr. Fleming neglects to point this out.

Conservatives are normally opposed to increased immigration, but in the interests of protecting a little boy from a communist dictator (who is the only reason that Mr. Gonzalez wants his son to return from the freedom he has in America), they have sided with many Cuban-Americans. Liberals and Dr. Fleming have taken the unusual tack of proclaiming observance of Cuban and U.S. family law, which both dictate that Elian return to his father in Cuba. But in 1984, Cuba and the United States signed a treaty outlining the terms of migration from Cuba to the United States, and in 1995, Cuba and the United States reaffirmed a 1994 commitment to ensure "safe, orderly, and legal" migration. Under the 1995 agreement, any refugee intercepted at sea by the U.S. Coast Guard or who illegally entered Guantánamo Naval Base was to be returned to Cuba. As Mark Falcoff pointed out in the April 2000 issue of *Commentary*, the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1964 grants automatic political asylum to anyone (including Elian) who makes it to U.S. shores.

The true "besetting American sin" will be abdicating to Castro's political smoke bombs and supporting normal trade relations with China. The United States should adhere to its agreements and enforce economic sanctions across the board on countries that violate basic human rights and liberties.

—Nathan Byerly
Publisher
Carolina Review
Chapel Hill, NC

I picked up my April issue of *Chronicles* today and could hardly believe my eyes when I began to read the piece which advocated making little Elian a sacrificial lamb to Castro. I turned the page to see who the heretic was who dared violate the pages of my favorite periodical. To my horror, it was you, Dr. Fleming.

The Elian issue has become a litmus test of sorts, which speaks volumes about the current state of our politics and morality. The reprobate Clinton mob, with their moll Ma Reno and her stooge Doris Meissner at the INS, care little about defending our borders and national sovereignty. They allow millions of illegal aliens to violate our borders and fail to deport even criminal aliens, but they are hell-bent to deport Elian to please Castro. To our shame, the majority of Americans support them.

Along with Castro's propaganda machine, American fellow travelers and the Clinton mob have put forth a propaganda barrage based on parental rights (a concept foreign to communist totalitarianism). They are abetted by our mainstream media's hostility toward Elian's Miami family and the surrounding Cuban-American community. Matt Lauer, Katie Couric, Gloria Borger, and Sam Donaldson, to name a few, can scarcely contain their fierce intolerance of anyone who tries to explain the facts of the case.

The decay of the conservative movement has been illustrated by "conservatives" like Rep. Steve Largent (R-OK) who have bought into the Clinton/Castro propaganda campaign. That strange alliance with the left is made in the name of "the rule of law" and "family values." Some of my associates in the immigration control movement take the absurd, hard-line position that Elian is here illegally and must, therefore, be deported. They argue that we must obey the custody laws irrespective of whether Cuba shows any respect for the rule of law.

It has become obvious that most Americans have lost, or perhaps never had, fear and loathing of communist oppression. That excuse does not apply in your case, which seems to be built on despair at our own decay and the moral equivalence argument used so often by the left during the Cold War. I confess that I had some initial concerns about Elian being exposed to all of the corrupting influences in America today. But the logical extension of that line of thought is to advocate totalitarianism here to purge negative influences.

You have chosen the side of Bill Clinton, Janet Reno, Maxine Waters, Al Sharpton, and a lot of other unsavory characters. I would hope that fact gives you some pause. I have only Al Gore to jolt my comfort zone. I am willing to allow that even he may be subject to an occasional attack of conscience, but even if his enlightened position is due to political considerations, any help in saving Elian from a life under communist oppression is welcome.

—Gary K. Stark
La Palma, CA

Who could quarrel with the vigorously logical analysis you have made of the case of Elian Gonzalez? And yet, several points remain to be covered.

The mother of the child who made the supreme sacrifice in order to free her son from life under an evil dictatorship, although dead, remains a factor in the case. What were the motives or impulses that caused her to engage in a perilous adventure with her little boy on an improvised embarkation in which she and ten companions met death, while her son was the sole miraculous survivor?

The child was apparently in the custody of the mother; as to your statement that he entered the United States illegally, he was obviously brought ashore by

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United States personnel.

The father has remained and has sired another little boy. If Elian is returned to his father, it will be to live under the control of a stepmother and in competition with her son, which is traditionally a heinous situation.

I cannot agree with your conclusion, and I am very displeased with the authoritative tone of your article.

I will not renew my subscription to *Chronicles*.

—*Alvin D. Laidley*
Carmichaels, PA

Thomas Fleming's piece on the Elian Gonzalez affair is thoughtful and well-intentioned but seriously flawed. He calls the case "a simple child-custody battle." However, the matter was elevated into an international confrontation by Fidel Castro, not by the boy's Miami relatives. Before that, it was merely an unusual immigration case.

What Dr. Fleming refers to as the "mischief" in this case has not been made by allegedly conservative Republicans (who haven't done a damn thing) and so-called family-values Christians (who haven't even been heard from). No, the real mischief-makers are Fidel Castro and his ideological supporters and sympathizers in America: The National Council of Churches; liberal members of the news media, especially Geraldo Rivera; and Representatives Charles Rangel, Alcee Hastings, Maxine Waters, Jose Serrano, *et al*. Add to that Bill Clinton, Janet Reno, and Doris Meissner, and you have the making of plenty of mischief.

—*Christopher Ikaris*
Brooklyn, NY

Dr. Fleming Replies:

The arguments against returning Elian Gonzalez to his father fall into two (admittedly overlapping) categories. The first set of arguments is on the principle that the U.S. government should exercise a "right" to deprive a foreign national of his child if a) the child happens to be on U.S. soil, and b) the country to which he would be returned is ruled by a repressive dictatorship. The second set consists of special pleadings that Juan Gonzalez is a bad father or not free to speak his mind or that the mother "died for freedom," etc.

There is, it goes without saying, no legal justification for the intervention of any government agency in America—local, state, or national—and apart from the Republicans' equally obscene intervention to steal Walter Polavchak from *his* father, no one to the right of Karl Marx and Hillary Clinton has ever hinted that any government had such authority. That should be the end of a rational argument, but apparently it is not. Cuba is a communist dictatorship that sends students out to cut sugar cane and forces them into indoctrination camps. Sending Elian back to Cuba would be like sending a Jewish kid back to Nazi Germany.

Hitler was bound to turn up in the argument, but what is the parallel? Nazis selectively persecuted Jews; to what persecuted group is Elian supposed to belong? Yes, communist states indoctrinate children; the ruling elite runs the schools and controls the media. If someone wants to say that there is a difference in kind between their state-controlled education and media and ours, he will have to make that case. There is simply no evidence to suggest that people living under communism have had a harder time rearing decent children than those of us who live in so-called Western so-called democracies. My recent experiences in the United States and in postcommunist countries suggest the opposite.

Much is made of the fact that, in communist Cuba, children are said to belong to the state. None of these defenders of parental rights has apparently heard of the good old American doctrine of *parens patriae*, by which state governments claim the right to determine the proper education and upbringing of children. Here in Illinois, the Republican and Democratic legislators passed a child-protection bill in which they uniformly substituted the phrase "the best interests of the child" for every previous protection of parental rights. The very fact that any American would want to use the government to determine custody of an alien is a sign of how far we have gone in elevating the state over the family.

The other set of arguments have largely to do with the circumstances of the case. It is said, for example, that our government(s) have jurisdiction because, as a Cuban landing on American shores, Elian is automatically a refugee. If that were the case, then his status would be decided by the INS, not by any family court in Florida, and the INS says we should send him back. In fact, many of the Cubans who reach the United States are denied refugee status, particularly (by an agreement with Cuba) when the aliens are intercepted before reaching American soil.

Then there are a set of arguments about the Gonzalez family, which boil down to something like this: "Mothers have a superior claim to their children; this mother chose to risk death in order to give her son the chance to grow up in freedom; Juan Gonzalez originally wanted the boy to go to America and, in asking for his return, he is acting under duress." None of this is true.

By Christian tradition and ancient law, the father is head of the household, and in a divorce he has automatic custody. Anglo-American feminist liberals in the 19th century did, it is true, tamper with this fundamental provision of the common law, natural law, and divine law, but today in the United States, the presumption in favor of the mother is disappearing. In the Gonzalez case, the father remarried; the mother was shacking up with a boyfriend. The father had custody five days out of seven; the mother kidnapped the kid and recklessly exposed him to mortal danger.

For what? We shall never know, and it hardly matters. The simplest and most honorable motive would be the desire to live with her relatives in Miami. The mere fact that Juan Gonzalez asked his former in-laws to take care of his son in Miami says nothing about the state of his feelings when told of his ex-wife's criminal behavior. Upon entering the country, Mr. Gonzalez was closeted with Doris Meissner and Janet Reno, who were clearly urging him to solve Bill Clinton's political problem by defecting to the United States. He has so far refused to give in to their blandishments. He cannot be acting under duress.

The only thing else to say is that I agree with the critic who said that this case is a "litmus test." It is. On the one side are those who take their stand on law, tradition, the integrity of families, and the truths of revealed religion. On the other side are the child-savers who have spent the century looking for pretexts to snatch our sons and daughters, joined by Christian conservatives who can make no better argument than "*Yanqui si, Cuba no.*"

We have always seen our role at *Chronicles* as primarily educational, and the good news for us is that there is so much work left to do even among our good friends and loyal readers.

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CONTEMPORARY JOURNALISM suffers from many problems; to help us understand them, a quick imaginative exercise might be useful. Not too long ago, the South Carolina legislature had to decide on the emotive issue of whether to remove the Confederate battle flag from atop the state Capitol. The issues involved were complex, and too familiar to be recycled here, but for present purposes, let us imagine a newspaper story about the event to decide whether it goes beyond the bounds of proper journalism. Reporting on the diehard defenders of the flag, our hypothetical story proceeds as follows: "'You see senators in tears—they know this vote may well be their last . . . I've never seen a vote that required more courage.' . . . Many lawmakers have also described being appalled at the mail and phone calls they have received from opponents of the flag, who say the legislators are working for the devil and will go to hell and should forget about being reelected. . . . And in some cases, the threats appear to have backfired by convincing lawmakers of the depth and breadth of anti-flag feeling here, persuading them to vote for the flag. . . . Senator X, asked today if she risked losing her seat with her vote, said 'All of us do, but so what?'"

Right away, anyone with the slightest knowledge of journalistic standards will be shaking his head and listing the elementary flaws in the piece. Most glaringly, only representatives of one side of the argument are quoted at all, never mind at any length; only flag defenders are portrayed sympathetically, and indeed, heroically; the subjects of the story possess an identity only insofar as they epitomize heroic or villainous causes; and unless we scrupulously note the location of quotation marks, it is all but impossible to tell when the writer has finished quoting those selected pols with whom he agrees, and when he is expressing his own personal opinion. Well, that gives the game away. The piece is so loaded, so repeatedly crosses any conceivable line between news and editorial, that it must be bogus. It cannot have appeared even in the most unreconstructed newspaper in the most conservative corner of the South. Something so tendentious must have appeared as a paper in a journalism class, the sort of endeavor which the professor marks with an admonitory "See me in office hours!"

Yet the article really did appear in almost exactly the form quoted, and in an actual newspaper, namely, the *New York Times* ("All the news that fits our ideology"), back on April 20. I made a couple of minor changes: The state involved was Vermont, not South Carolina, and the issue was not the Confederate flag, but same-sex civil unions (throughout the passage quoted, I substituted "flag" for "gay" or "civil union"); but otherwise, the quotations are faithful enough. In fact, I left out some of the more blatant bits of editorializing. One glorious example: "Several senators said hostile messages and phone calls made them think: if this is what it is like for me, what have gays and lesbians had to endure their whole lives?" Self-evidently, gay civil unions must be approved immediately, even (or especially) in the face of massive resistance by that bunch of boobs and bigots we call the electorate. As journalist Carey Goldberg happily admits, total opposition to civil union is indicated by "public opinion polls, phone calls, letters and town meeting votes"; nevertheless, the only moral course is full speed ahead, and damn the democracy. And yes, in somewhat different words, that is the main thrust of what purports to be objective journalism in a major media outlet.

Of course, knowing the precise issues under discussion provides the key for understanding what is otherwise baffling, namely, how a reputable paper could have presented such a shamelessly partisan piece under the guise of news, rather than editorial. If you were to sit a group of journalists down and ask them to explain the difference between news and editorial, most of them could probably do it quite clearly and (in many cases) soberly. As they learned in college courses, news is meant to be a straight retelling of events or sayings, while political interpretation is properly left to the editorial page. But—and this a crucially important "but"—that distinction only holds when we are dealing with issues on which reasonable people can disagree. At some point, though, the word somehow goes forth that a particular issue has moved beyond legitimate controversy and into the realm of uncontested metaphysical truth, and thereafter, no form of objectivity is required or welcomed.

This practice of shifting stories to a higher plateau may go back to the desegregation crises of the early 1960's, when virtually none of the national media felt that balance was appropriate, since the story was so literally black and white: There were good guys and bad guys, civil-rights protesters and Klan yahoos, Martin Luther King and Orval Faubus. A journalist did not have to make the slightest pretense of reporting on a white Southerner as if he were a human being with rational opinions on anything. Since then, the range of stories deemed unworthy of balanced coverage has expanded enormously to include women's issues in the 1970's, gays in the 1980's, guns and tobacco over the last decade; and the label of "Obviously Correct" has now alighted upon gay marriage. Fifteen years ago, that notion was several leagues beyond flaky: Now, it's required doctrine. Just when did that happen? I don't recall being asked to vote on it.

Two questions strike me about this process of issue elevation. The first is technological: How exactly does it happen? Is there a day or a moment when an edict proceeds from some Media High Command Center, perhaps buried under a mountain in Colorado? The speed and uniformity with which objectivity is abandoned on a given issue both suggest some degree of coordination, though I genuinely find it hard to believe that anything so concerted exists. My second question is psychological. Do media people reporting on one of the Obviously Correct issues still believe that they are working within traditional concepts of fairness and objectivity? I have a horrible suspicion that they do, and they really see nothing wrong in the simplistic agitprop language they adopt in such cases ("Seeking to defend his vicious Neanderthal prejudices, Representative Y declared that . . . "). Here, surely, is an Orwellian phenomenon deserving intense research, namely, a whole profession of doubleplusgood duckspeakers, who don't even acknowledge they are presenting a party line. The only thing worse than an officially controlled press is one that does not know it is controlled.

—*Philip Jenkins*

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ZIMBABWE is in turmoil, and by early May, the existence of elaborate plans for a British-led emergency evacuation of thousands of British and other European Union nationals was confirmed by the Foreign Office in London. Zimbabwe's Marxist president, Robert Mugabe, reiterated his pledge to redistribute white-owned farms to landless blacks, using "emergency legislation" empowering the government to "confiscate" the farmland without compensation.

For years, Mugabe has threatened to seize the farms. In September 1998, he even demanded $1.5 billion from the World Bank, Britain, and the United States to buy five million hectares of white-owned farmland in order to distribute it to black peasants, insisting that Western governments had to compensate white farmers for land they had "stolen" from blacks.

A year earlier, Mugabe had announced that his government was about to seize 1,722 white-owned farms without paying compensation. This led thousands of black squatters to stage sit-ins on white-owned farms, eager to stake their claim. Most were persuaded to leave by government assurances that a huge state resettlement program was only months away. When Mugabe's information minister subsequently announced that hundreds of profitable farms had been selected for seizure by government-appointed "committees"—without reference to land registers—it was clear that much of that land was supposed to wind up in the hands of government cronies.

White-run farms are virtually the only commercially viable private agricultural concerns in sub-Saharan Africa, and any land grab would reduce a thriving sector to the grim level of subsistence farming seen everywhere north of the Zambezi. This fact stopped Mugabe from carrying out his threats until recently. Now, however, he believes that the political capital to be gained for himself and his corrupt coterie outweighs the economic damage. Like most African despots, he is perfectly happy to ruin his country for the sake of enhancing his power.

For the comprehensive historical record of who did what to whom in that now unhappy land, *The Great Betrayal*, the memoirs of the former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith, is compulsory reading. He knew what was in store for Rhodesia under the likes of Mugabe, and his account of the duplicity of Western "mediators" (Carter, Carrington & Co.) in ensuring Mugabe's 1979 victory is both depressing and unsurprising. What we're seeing today are the belated fruits of that flawed victory by "a bunch of communist terrorists who had come into their position through intimidation, corruption and a blatantly dishonest election."

It did not take long for Mugabe's true colors to show. He first engineered a showdown with Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU, the only real political rival to his ZANU and the last major opposition to a one-party state. Nkomo was demoted and a dozen of his ZAPU officials put into prison. Mugabe's ruthless North Korean-trained forces killed over 30,000 Matabele tribesmen, presumed Nkomo supporters, while the West remained silent.

The Zimbabwean regime next began openly to provoke the whites. Mugabe made speeches attacking the whites and inciting racial hatred. Emigration rose to 10,000 per month. In the end, barely 50,000 whites remained, one-half of one percent of Zimbabwe's population. Some were imprisoned without trial on trumped-up charges. When elections were held in 1985, opposition supporters had their windows smashed, and at least three people were killed. In the election of 1990, opposition candidates received visits from Mugabe's Central Intelligence Organisation and were told to withdraw from the election "or their families would get the message." Violence was openly advocated by ZANU officials. Some gunmen suspected of shooting and assaulting political opponents were caught by the police, but if they were ZANU members, Mugabe simply pardoned them.

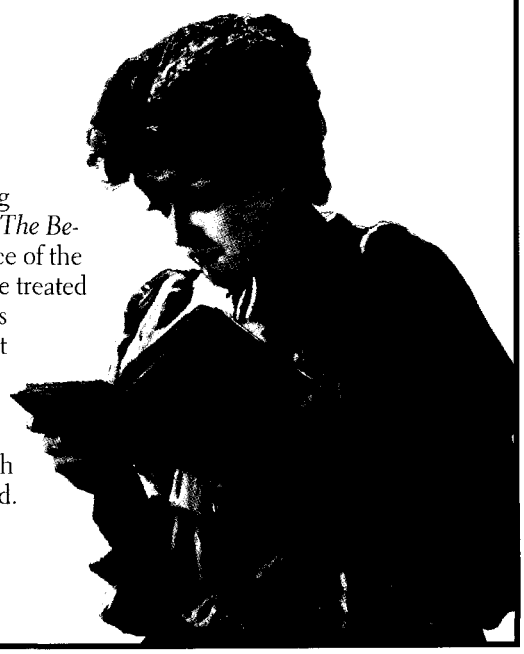
The land-appropriation tactics of Mugabe's government during this period explain his present incitement of armed robbery and murder. Although there were over two million acres of farmland available, with another million owned by whites who were willing to sell, ZANU persisted in its vote-gathering claim that "white racists" still owned all the best land and had to be forced to hand it over. Available land was allocated to ZANU officials. As the economy rapidly went bankrupt and became ever more dependent on loans and handouts, Mugabe raised the defense budget by over a thousand percent, and awarded himself and his ministers a 64-percent salary increase.

In short, Zimbabwe now follows Africa's time-honored tradition of "one man, one vote, once." The half of the country's farmland currently owned by black Zimbabweans is used for subsistence farming and contributes nothing to the national economy. By taking the commercially productive farmland, Mugabe will effectively cut the GNP of Zimbabwe in half and put a quarter of a million black farmworkers out of work, about one out of every eight blacks currently holding a job in Zimbabwe. The prospects for foreign investment will be considerably diminished.

The white liberal establishment in Britain and America is understandably embarrassed. It would dearly like countries like Zimbabwe and South Africa to prosper, but in Washington and London

BOOK OF NEXT MONTH

Goethe was not alone in regarding Alessandro Manzoni's one novel, *The Betrothed*, as the fictional masterpiece of the 19th century, and the Italians have treated it as a work second only to Dante's *Commedia*. *I promessi sposi* is not just a great story—though it is that; it is also a satiric analysis of Italy under foreign occupation. Americans who have lived through the past decade should understand.



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there is no doubt that Zimbabwe's economy will finally collapse if Mugabe confiscates the property of the remaining 3,000 white farmers.

When the consequences of Mugabe's action become obvious, watch out for the multibillion dollar Western plan to bail out the Zimbabwean economy. U.S. taxpayers, among others, will have to prop Mugabe up after the remaining white farmers have been killed, robbed, and kicked out. Of course, we'll be told that foreign aid makes the world safer and more stable. But by now we are inured to lies, and many a liberal voice will murmur that the white farmers "had it coming."

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

THE CLINTON SCANDALS continue to gurgle below the surface of American politics and law, occasionally throwing up a polluted geyser. Kenneth Starr's successor as independent counsel, Robert Ray, is still considering indicting the President when he leaves office; disbarment proceedings are under way against Mr. Clinton in his home state of Arkansas; and Linda Tripp, nemesis of Mr. Clinton and his paramour, Miss Lewinsky, is still enmeshed in Maryland criminal proceedings.

Mrs. Tripp is the only major player in the Lewinsky imbroglio yet to find herself under criminal prosecution. A Democratic prosecutor in Maryland had her indicted by a grand jury for violating Maryland's anti-wiretap statute, which, on its face, prohibits the interception of telephone communications unless both parties to the conversation give permission. Miss Lewinsky never gave Mrs. Tripp permission to record their chats, and it appears that, at some time in late November or early December 1998, Mrs. Tripp became aware that taping conversations without permission violated Maryland law. The indictment refers only to the taping of one conversation, on December 22, 1998, at a time when she would have possessed the requisite criminal intent to violate the statute.

Some months ago (*Cultural Revolutions*, October 1999), I predicted that the case would soon be dismissed or withdrawn. First of all, it seemed clear that the Maryland statute was designed to protect innocent Marylanders, not a resident of the District of Columbia (such as Miss Lewinsky) who was trying to enmesh a citizen of Maryland (Mrs. Tripp) in the commission of a felony (obstructing justice in the Paula Jones case). Second, it seemed that the obvious political motives of the prosecution would prove too embarrassing even for an ambitious Maryland district attorney. What goes on in our courts, however, is now more unpredictable than college sports or the stock market. The Maryland prosecutors stuck to their case, and Tripp's attorneys filed a battery of motions to try to get the indictment dismissed or witnesses barred from testifying.

On May 5, Maryland trial judge Diane Leisure denied the motion to dismiss the indictment. This was the chief fact that appeared in the headlines, but a closer look at some of the early articles and the judge's 42-page decision tells a different story. It turns out that the judge had granted defense motions to bar most of the testimony of Miss Lewinsky and one of Mrs. Tripp's neighbors, apparently the only two witnesses who are capable of dating the December conversation after the time when Mrs. Tripp had learned that taping without consent was impermissible. Judge Leisure found that these witnesses had derived their knowledge of the matter from Ken Starr's investigation, and since Starr had granted Tripp immunity from federal prosecution, federal and state law prevented material from his investigation from serving as a basis for conviction in a state trial.

Judge Leisure's comments about Miss Lewinsky and about the Maryland prosecutors were unusually caustic. "The fact that Ms. Lewinsky admitted that she lied under oath in a federal proceeding and has stated that lying has been a part of her life," noted the judge, "does not enhance her credibility as a witness." With exquisite judicial understatement, she observed that "The evidence also supports a finding that [Miss Lewinsky's] testimony was shaped to meet the needs of the State." Judge Leisure declined to dismiss the indictment because it did charge a crime (in judicial parlance, it was "valid on its face"), but she made no effort to conceal her view that the prosecution had mismanaged the case and that there was no other witness who could supply an untainted dating of the tape mentioned in the indictment.

Judge Leisure threw the prosecution a tiny bone by holding that it was still permissible for Miss Lewinsky to testify that she never gave permission for the tapings, but Stephen Montanarelli, the Maryland prosecutor, admitted that he now had a "major problem" that was a "tremendous hurdle" to overcome. One of Mrs. Tripp's attorneys, Stephen M. Kohn, went further and stated that Judge Leisure's rulings were "devastating to the prosecution." The smart money was betting that the Maryland prosecutors would now decide to drop the case, since they had none to speak of. Your correspondent, though, having once been burned, is now twice shy. The most astute comment on Judge Leisure's ruling was probably Mrs. Tripp's: "The decision to indict me was politically motivated and wrong. This case was prosecuted solely because I blew the whistle on President Clinton's attempt to fix a court case. Given the court's ruling today, any action by the prosecution short of dismissal will constitute malicious prosecution."

—*Stephen B. Presser*

OBITER DICTA: The Rockford Institute's first Italian conference, on the shores of beautiful Lake Como, was a stunning success; in fact, it was so well attended that we had to turn people away. Those who missed it, however, should not lose hope. You can start the *real* new millennium in the Eternal City, while attending a very exclusive conference on how the Romans lost their liberty four times, and what their experience means for America's future. Spend four nights at an elegant hotel in the heart of the Roman Forum, with daily tours of the city's attractions. For those who crave the sunlight, there will be an optional three-night follow-up trip to Naples. For details (including dates and pricing), please call **Aaron Wolf** at (815) 964-5811. Reservations are limited; please make your plans early.

Our poetry this month is provided by **Robert Beum**, who resides in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Dr. Beum's poems and essays have appeared in the *Sewanee Review*, *National Review*, the *Christian Century*, *Prairie Schooner*, and the *Southwest Review*, among others. His most recent books are *Classic European Short Stories* and *Modern British Essayists*.

Our art this month is provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

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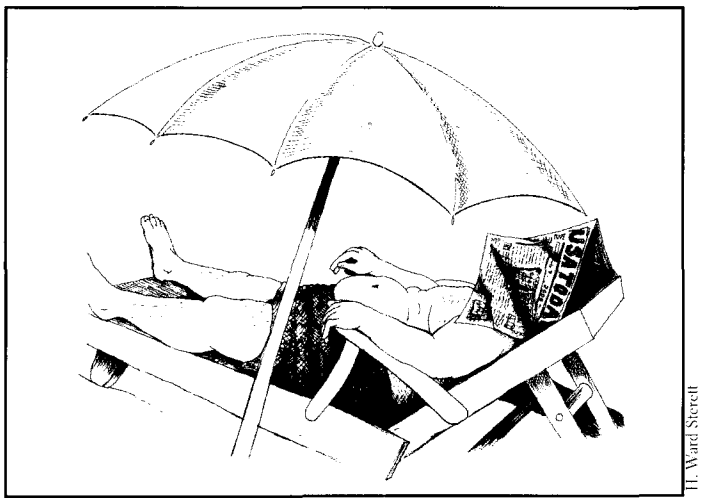

H. Ward Stevens

A Revolution to Save the World

by Thomas Fleming

"Beyond Left and Right" was the title of the *Antiwar.com* conference which brought together Pat Buchanan and Alexander Cockburn, Justin Raimondo and Lenora Fulani (to say nothing of two *Chronicles* editors) in the same room (if not all at the same time) for a broad critique of the aggressive New World Order launched by the Bush and Clinton administrations. It was a cordial exchange, in which left and right did not pass each other like ships in the night but crossed at a 90-degree angle after exchanging salutes. However, before quartering the hammer-and-sickle with the *fleur-de-lis*, opponents of U.S./NATO imperialism might ask what the two sides have in common.

To answer that question, most of the radicals and reactionaries in San Mateo, California, would agree in opposing the U.S. policy of imperialism and in condemning last year's aggression against Yugoslavia. Beyond that point, agreement becomes more difficult, partly because so many different political perspectives are represented, partly because some of us—even most of us—are unclear about what we do believe or about how the United States turned into what it is today. If there is to be not a coalition but some sort of joint operation, both parties had better be clear about the limits of what they agree upon.

The only ideological coalition worth talking about will be the union of reactionary Christians when they find the will to resist the Jacobin governments that have destroyed their world, but even a popular front alliance should have its rules. At a bare minimum, it could not include sentimental pacifists who oppose the use of violence, civil disobedients who believe in doing evil that good may come of it, or nostalgic leftists who cannot believe that Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, and Tito have let them down.

One part of the problem lies in the Cold War America to which so many conservatives look back as a Golden Age. In America today, nearly all of us are children of the Cold War. Some of the speakers at the conference opposed the U.S. policy of containment, opposed the undeclared war in Vietnam that cost so many Vietnamese and American lives, and resisted the demonization of the Russian people as our natural enemy. Others thought that communism was a nightmare menace that had to be kept in its box and still believe that Ronald Reagan's buildup of the American war machine brought down the Berlin Wall and saved the world from an Evil Empire.

I understood both positions, because I had opposed both the war in Vietnam and despised the American left's manifest attraction to communism. Where were the isolationist reactionaries in the 60's? Russell Kirk, I know, disliked America's Southeast Asian adventure, but he kept his peace. What else was he to do? He was part of a coalition defined by aggressive anticommunism. Other isolationists drifted toward the left and found a home there. I do not know what would have happened if conservatives like Kirk could have joined forces with Eugene McCarthy and William Appleman Williams. Certainly, a different sort of coalition would have been the result. But after the death of Robert Taft, conservatives had little choice but to identify themselves with resistance to godless communism in what they regarded as a struggle for the world.

Near the end of the Cold War, Jean-François Revel published an influential book under the title, *How Democracies Perish*. Revel's thesis, like the thesis of earlier Cold Warriors such as James Burnham, was a variation on the old story of Lenin and the rope: The greedy West, incapable of understanding the ideological force of communism, was collaborating with the very powers that would destroy it, and if communists lacked the money to buy the rope from the West, well, the West would al-

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ways lend it to them.

On a deeper level, however, the West's failure to combat its enemies can be traced to the very socioeconomic system it seeks to protect. In theory, the Cold Warriors were protecting the peoples of Britain, France, and the United States against the expansion of an evil empire, but nations can only be successfully defended by people who believe in nationhood, which is anathema to the liberal assumptions that are the foundation of most Western states.

At the heart of liberal democracy lies the conviction that all nations are the same or ought to be; and just as all individuals are, in principle, equal and should be able to compete in the marketplace for success, so all nations, cultures, and religions are basically equal, so long as they are willing to enter into the marketplace of ideological competition. Liberal nation-states cannot control immigration, restrict citizenship, or protect trade, precisely because the nation-state is only a temporary stop on the train line that leads to a globally integrated marketplace in which we are all—or ought to be—citizens of the world, not citizens of the United States.

In this quest for a global utopia based on the principle of equality, modern states have undermined the family, made war upon the church, and ridiculed every principle of morality and common sense. As a substitute for divine law and the wisdom that comes from human experience, they have offered us a nonsensical philosophy of human rights, and to enforce these rights, they have broken every moral law known to civilized people while at the same time celebrating their moral superiority over the tribal cultures of the Balkans.

If anyone resists the conversion process, he and his people are labeled genocidal criminals; CNN will obligingly show doctored photos of concentration camps and mass graves; international tribunals will declare him guilty of crimes against human rights; and the U.S. government will put a price on his head—as if that were not in itself a crime.

During the Cold War, the diverse political and economic systems of the West were lumped together under the rubric of Western Democratic Capitalism. This was part of an effort to create a Western ideology with which to oppose the ideology of Marxist communism, but—and it is time to speak plainly—the democratic capitalism extolled by Cold War liberals (most of whom called themselves conservatives) and unreconstructed Trotskyists (who called themselves neoconservatives) has very little in common with the democracies of Switzerland and ancient Athens or, for that matter, with the old American republic.

Greek and Swiss democracy worked in small-scale communities and was actually based on the will of the people, and it has virtually nothing in common with the vast bureaucracies that govern the United States and the nations of the European Union. In fact these systems are the very opposite: For the Greeks, the family and the little community was almost everything; today, Western governments make war on the family and on every little community, whether ethnic or religious. The attempt to create a New World Order translates this principle of national and anti-human bureaucracy to the global level.

It is time to set aside the popular misconception that democracies do not wage aggressive war or establish empires. Who were the most democratic peoples in history? The Athenians who, as soon as they established a democracy, created an empire; the Florentines, who subjugated most of central Italy; the liberal British monarchy of the 19th century that controlled India and much of Africa. Who were more democratic than the 19th-century Americans who annihilated the Indians, kicked the Spanish out of Florida, and grabbed a large part of the continent from Mexico before going on to subjugate the southern third of the republic?

Modern states have undermined the family, made war upon the church, and ridiculed every principle of morality and common sense.

The triumphant democrats went on to conquer Cuba and Puerto Rico and wage a genocidal war against the people of the Philippines. Democracies, both actual (like 19th-century America) and phony (like America today), are by their nature expansionist because they cater to the appetites of the masses and are enthralled by the rich and powerful. If you have any doubts, consider only the history of the United States in this century or even in the past ten years.

In our time, however, "democratic capitalism" is far from democratic, and if capitalism has anything to do with the free market, it is not capitalist, either. America is fast becoming a plutocracy, and terms like "capitalism" and "free enterprise" are used loosely to mean a system of transnational corporations that seek to control the world's business.

Any attempt to suppress economic freedom, as took place in the former Soviet Union and in the former Yugoslavia, has disastrous consequences both for a national economy and for human social life. Even the mixed economic systems of Scandinavia and Britain have tended to undermine creativity and initiative and to destroy social institutions. This is what so many of our potential allies on the left refuse to understand. They look at businessmen and see the enemy, but when the same corporate executive goes to work for the Department of Health and Human Services, he is working for the good of mankind.

Economic freedom is an essential quality of human dignity, and when governments attempt to repress that freedom—as they do in communist and socialist countries—they are destroying human dignity. In the West, however, which is supposedly devoted to economic liberty, governments regulate small businessmen in order to benefit the giant corporations, and under misnamed free trade agreements and the World Trade Organization, a small coterie of multinational executives is attempting to eliminate competition, destroy small economic communities (such as nations), and to replace free enterprise with a global economic bureaucracy that will act as a NATO without weapons, though they will always be able to call in the NATO troops whenever their usual methods of bribery and intimidation fail.

Free trade, in fact, nearly always spells empire. Who have been the greatest free-traders of the past two centuries? British imperialists and the bipartisan free-trade imperialists of the Bush-Clinton administrations. Libertarians and classical liberals have to decide whether they are going to be free-trade impe-

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rialists or patriotic isolationists.

True democracy, in the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, means that the government leaves people alone—not simply as individuals, but as families and members of communities. A truly democratic state may not attempt to engineer an artificial unity of diverse regions and peoples, as the Italian fascists did; or suppress religion and shift populations, as Stalin did; or manipulate internal boundaries and laws to benefit one group at the expense of another, which is done in the United States today in the name of minority rights and in the old Yugoslavia. All these tricks, whatever pretty names they are called by, should be seen for what they are: parts of a political system that aims at total control over human social life.

In the United States, this revolutionary project began to take shape about the same time as Marxist revolution in Russia, but it was not until the 1930's that American political leaders began to impose a national-socialist regime that paralleled developments in Italy, Germany, and the Soviet Union. The American ideological state, however, is distinguished from the others in one important respect: Instead of relying on coercive force, on jackboots and lager, gulags and *Pravda*, the new American state employed the art of seduction. Consumerism, sexual immorality, prescription tranquilizers, and commercial TV more effectively undermined the old American character than any of the devices employed by the hard totalitarian states.

Fifteen years ago in *Chronicles*, we began to point out that Americans were no longer citizens of a republic but subjects of an empire, and that this imperial system has been erected on the ruins of our old republic. The new American religion of false democracy, rigged markets, and multicultural mass culture can only complete the destruction of Europe that was begun in Serbia by American bombs.

For our leaders, the ongoing task is to find ethnic brush wars in Chechnya or Kosovo that demand a graduated response of concern, alarm, condemnation, and intervention. The evidence of Bosnia and Kosovo suggests that this degraded Western elite will not be satisfied until the entire world is a Disneyland replica of San Diego. For them, nations do not exist except as local administrative units of the global marketplace; this attitude was revealed recently when a top Clinton administration official asked for an expanded role for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to protect refugees within a state—in other words, to give the UNHCR the implicit right to intervene in internal struggles.

What is the American left's public response to the economic wing of the New World Order? Riots staged by androgynous hooligans who have watched one too many PBS documentaries on the 60's. "You say you want a revolution . . . "—but they do not. A revolution requires courage and discipline.

We have seen these faces before, chaotic, resentful, stupefied. They danced in the streets at the Festival of Reason; they drank and fornicated behind the Paris barricades in 1848; and they greeted the Bolsheviks as the liberators of the human spirit from God, morality, mathematics, and hygiene.

The cultural left defines itself by its hatred of Christendom, but there are remnants of a more humane, almost Chestertonian left that sees the New World Order as the realization of the Rockefeller dream of one market/one state/*ein Reich/ein Führer*. They can see the mark of the beast on the faces of Madeleine Albright and George Soros, and—who knows?—in struggling against these devils, they may join the side of the angels. c

DICTATIONS

"No Man Is an Island"

In claiming that each of us is a part of the whole, John Donne was not criticizing King James I for his isolationist foreign policy. Donne's reflections on human unity were spiritual, not political—though how each man's death diminishes me is something I do not at all understand. It is a long stretch from mankind's spiritual unity in Christ to the forcible unification of the globe under one super-state, and attacks on political isolationism illustrate the danger of applying a Christian concept (in this case, human brotherhood) to anti-Christian conditions (U.S. global hegemony).

In the early 1920's, "isolationism" began to be applied as a term of abuse to members of Congress (mostly Republican) who got in the way of Woodrow Wilson's fantasies of world government. Many of the Republican leaders (e.g., Henry Cabot Lodge) were not isolationist at all, but economic imperialists who thought the League of Nations might obstruct the expansion of American business interests. Even principled "isolationists" like Bob La Follette and Burt Wheeler disliked the term and always insisted they were not arguing for American withdrawal from the world but only for a just and responsible foreign policy.

But what is wrong with being an "isolationist"? To some, the image conjures up a medical ward where patients infected with plague or tuberculosis are isolated from the rest of the hospital. But the basic meaning of "isolation" is to be in the condition of an island. When Sir George Foster told the Canadian parliament in 1896 that the British Empire "stands splendidly isolated in Europe," he was praising the mother country's self-sufficiency and rugged independence. No one in his right mind would accuse England of withdrawing from the world or of sticking its head in the sand.

If isolation was good enough for the British *Empire*, it ought to be good enough for American republicans. Some isolationists have proudly spoken of America as an island fortress, and the symbol could still be a potent political talisman. Islands engage in trade and diplomacy, send and receive visitors, and—in the case of Britain—even fight aggressive wars (though the British post-colonial experience should be enough to discourage even a Kristol from imperialism). What intelligent islanders do not do, however, is engage in risky and profitless adventures around the world.

Twenty-five years ago, the United States—in an act of cowardice and betrayal worthy of the Kissinger who orchestrated it—turned its back on the Vietnamese people it had dragged through war. We have learned nothing from that experience. What Eugene McCarthy observed in 1969 is a perfect description of our current dilemma: "America is more isolated than it has been since the heyday of isolationism, not by our withdrawing from the world but by the withdrawal of most of the world from us."

—*Humpty Dumpty*

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A Republic, Not an Empire

A Peace Party Is Born

by Patrick J. Buchanan

Foreign policy, the elites of both Beltway parties tell us, is not an issue in this election year. By that, they mean it is off the table, a matter already decided upon and settled by those who know what is best for America. So they, and their media auxiliaries, redirect our attention away from foreign policy to such burning national issues as the dating policy at Bob Jones University.

What is best for America and the world, they tell us, is that the United States should remain a superpower sheriff, the Wyatt Earp of the West, possessed of the sole right to deputize posses (or go it alone if necessary) to discipline evildoers wherever our "values" are threatened. This foreign policy poses a great and growing danger to the peace and security of the United States.

Last year, for 78 days, U.S. pilots flew thousands of missions against Serbia, destroying bridges, factories, electrical grids, and even hospitals, schools, and the occasional embassy. Yet, before launching his war, Mr. Clinton never received the authorization of Congress. But as a consequence of our triumph over Serbia, young men and women from California, Kentucky, Florida, and Maine are in Kosovo policing territory that has been violently contested for hundreds of years.

As of now, we do not know if U.S. troops will end up fighting Serbs, or Kosovar Albanians, or first one, then the other. But it is a near certainty that the United States will one day be forced to pull out of Kosovo, after having earned the lasting hatred of Serbs—a people who never harmed the United States—and of the Albanians, whose aspirations will not be satisfied until the United States helps to carve out an ethnically pure Greater Albania.

Look at the balance sheet of Bill Clinton's unconstitutional war. NATO, a defensive alliance, launched an offensive war against a nation that threatened no member of that alliance, dissipating the moral authority with which NATO had emerged from the Cold War. Serbia is smashed. Montenegro and Macedonia are destabilized. Kosovo was purged first of Albanians, then of Serbs, and now lies in ruins. U.S. relations with China and Russia have been damaged. For what? So we and NATO could police in perpetuity a Balkan province that has not the remotest connection to U.S. vital interests? Such are the fruits of neo-imperialism.

Meanwhile, a decade after the Gulf War, American soldiers and airmen stand ready to die to defend Saudi Arabia and Kuwait from Iran and Iraq—as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait conspire with Iran and Iraq to keep oil prices over $30 a barrel, looting America and gouging U.S. consumers.

For ten years, the United States has played the dominant role in maintaining rigid sanctions on Iraq. By one U.N. estimate, these sanctions have resulted in the death of 500,000 children. Will the parents of those children ever forgive us? Even our European allies recoil. By keeping these sanctions on Iraq, we flout every tenet of Christianity's Just War doctrine and build up deposits of hatred across the Arab world that will take decades to draw down. One day, our children shall pay the price of our callous indifference to what is happening to the children of Iraq.

Patrick J. Buchanan is a candidate for the Reform Party presidential nomination. This is an edited version of his speech to the Second Annual Antiwar.com *conference.*

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I speak as a proud Cold Warrior who supported every great anticommunist initiative from the days of JFK to Reagan. And I support a U.S. defense that is second to none and a foreign policy whereby America responds resolutely to any attack on American citizens, honor, or vital interests.

But what purpose is served by our shortening the lives of Iraqi people who have done us no harm? If Desert Storm could not remove Saddam Hussein, how are the women, children, and elderly of Iraq, the victims of our sanctions, supposed to overthrow him?

And if 78 days of bombing could not eject Slobodan Milosevic from power, how does forcing the people of Serbia to endure a brutal winter without fuel or heat advance our goal? What happened to the moral idea of proportionality, even in war-time, between means and ends?

We are in an election season, and the two major parties have made their predictable selections. Their debate over foreign policy is devoid of any fresh thinking. Both parties are frozen in the mindset of a Cold War that ended ten years ago.

During one debate, John McCain singled out Iraq, Libya, and North Korea as "rogue states" and advocated the armed overthrow of all three by U.S.-trained and equipped armies. Pressed on what he would do if his armies were being annihilated, the senator did not respond. But he did not reject the notion that Iran, a nation of 70 million, should also be designated a rogue state to be targeted for overthrow.

This is hubris; this is triumphalism; this is the arrogance of power; this is America's Brezhnev Doctrine. While I have singled McCain out, such ideas are commonplace among the global gamesmen in Washington.

Governor Bush cried out in anguish when he was compared by Senator McCain to Bill Clinton, but he did not utter a skeptical word about McCain's plans for rogue regimes. Indeed, the governor has exhibited neither absorbing interest nor extraordinary aptitude for foreign policy—to put it generously. His call last year for the war on Serbia to be waged "more ferociously" was his one memorable foreign-policy utterance. But notions of "rogue-state rollback" are music to the ears of the self-styled "Vulcans," the foreign-policy aides now homeschooling the governor.

Among the more prominent Vulcans is Paul Wolfowitz. A Pentagon aide to Bush the Elder, Wolfowitz produced in 1992 a blueprint for war against Russia that would utilize six carrier battle groups and 24 NATO divisions to rescue Lithuania, should Moscow recolonize that tiny republic.

Richard Perle, another of the "On-to-Baghdad" brigade, is perhaps Washington's premier enthusiast for using U.S. power to topple rogue regimes. Another tutor to Governor Bush is his father's former national security advisor, Brent Scowcroft. A few months ago, Gen. Scowcroft advocated putting a division of U.S. troops on the Golan Heights to police peace between Syria and Israel, thereby ensuring there would be dead Americans in any future Syrian-Israeli clash.

Not one of the Vulcans embraces the new thinking on foreign policy that has taken root in Congress and the country in the aftermath of the Cold War. This new thinking alarms Clintonites, who call it "isolationist," but even more the neoconservatives, who believe America should convert her hour of power into a "benevolent global hegemony."

Indeed, during Clinton's war on Serbia, one neoconservative strategist was so disheartened by the lack of war spirit among the Republican rank-and-file that he mused about giving up and leaving the GOP altogether.

But while many Democrats and some on the left are eager to challenge the Bush-Clinton New World Order, Vice President Gore is not among them. Mr. Gore is a Wilsonian in full. He exhibits a *New Republic*-style lust for cruise-missile strikes on "rogue nations." He was all for the war on Serbia. Nor did he allow a ray of daylight to open up between himself and Mr. Clinton on sanctions against Iraq or the strikes against that "poison-gas factory" in Sudan that turned out to be a pharmaceutical plant.

Mr. Gore is also an acolyte of the New World Order, ever ready to cede American sovereignty, and an architect of Clinton's Kyoto Treaty, under which global bureaucrats would dictate America's use of fossil fuels. When young Americans perished in a tragic accident over Iraq, Gore reflexively offered his condolences to the families of those who "had died in the service of the United Nations."

Quo Vadis? Where are you going, America?

Because of our sanctions on various nations, cruise-missile strikes upon others, and intervention in the internal affairs of still others in the wake of the Cold War, a seething resentment of America is brewing all over the world. And the haughty attitude of our foreign-policy elite only nurses the hatred. Hearken, if you will, to the voice of our own Xena, Madeleine Albright, announcing new airstrikes on Iraq: "If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see farther into the future."

Now I count myself an American patriot. But if this Beltway braggadocio about being the world's "indispensable nation" has begun to grate on me, how must it grate upon the Europeans, Russians, and peoples subject to our sanctions because they have failed, by our lights, to live up to our standards?

And how can all our meddling not fail to spark some horrible retribution? Recall: It was in retaliation for the bombing of Libya that Qaddafi agents blew up Pan Am 103. And it is said to have been in retaliation for the Vincennes' accidental shootdown of an Iranian airliner that Teheran collaborated with terrorists to blow up the Khobar towers. From Pan Am 103 to the World Trade Center to the embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar—have we not suffered enough to know that interventionism is the incubator of terrorism? Or will it take some cataclysmic atrocity on U.S. soil to awaken our global gamesmen to the asking price of empire?

America today faces a choice of destinies. We can be the peacemaker of the world—or its policeman who goes about nightsticking troublemakers until we, too, find ourselves in some bloody brawl we cannot handle. Let us use this transitory moment of American power and preeminence to encourage and assist old friends and allies to stand on their own feet and provide and pay for their own defense.

Let me state my present intent: If elected, I will have all U.S. troops out of the Balkan quagmire by year's end, and all American troops home from Europe by the end of my first term. Forty years ago, President Eisenhower pleaded with JFK to bring all U.S. troops home from Europe. Certainly, almost 60 years after the end of World War II and 15 years after the Berlin Wall fell is not too soon to get all U.S. troops out of Europe and let Europeans provide and pay the cost of their own defense. If not now, when?

And let us quickly adopt a measure of humility regarding

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how much we know about what is best for other peoples and cultures. In the words of the great scholar Russell Kirk: "There exists no single best form of government for the happiness of all mankind. The most suitable form of government depends on the historic experience, the customs, the beliefs, the state of culture . . . and all these things vary from land to land and age to age."

We are entering a fertile and exciting time in our politics. Our ossified two-party system, which has managed to stifle serious foreign-policy debate for a decade, is cracking up. Pressure is growing from dissidents within, and this year, there will be a mighty challenge from without. As Joe Namath said, I guarantee it.

The Reform Party will be on the ballot in 50 states, and, if I have anything to say about it—and I expect to—it will become a noninterventionist party, a peace party, that will reach out to Americans of right and left who reject the Third Way imperialism being forced upon us by the elites of both Beltway parties.

In this new era, many of us are rediscovering the old distrust of crusading that was at the center of the worldview of the old American right. We are conscious of our love for this country. We do not wish to isolate America from the world, only to isolate America from wars—the religious, ethnic, and territorial wars of less fortunate lands. There is a powerful body of American thought that flowed from the pens of George Washington and John Quincy Adams, William Jennings Bryan and Robert Taft—as well as all the nearly forgotten figures written about by Justin Raimondo and others—to help guide us. And their message is one I intend to stamp upon our banners in the campaign of 2000: A Republic, Not an Empire! America First! c

The Millennium Conflict: America First or World Government?

"Five years ago, historian Christopher Lasch published *The Revolt of the Elites*. It was a book about how our national elite was literally seceding from America. Pointing out the huge and growing gap in incomes between the elite and the middle class, Lasch argued that a more ominous gap existed in how each perceived America.

"The old elite, Lasch wrote, had a sense of obligation to country and community. But the new ruling class, more merit based, brainy, and mobile, congregates on the coasts and puts patriotism far down the list in its hierarchy of values. Indeed, said Lasch, 'it is a question of whether they think of themselves as Americans at all.'

"Lasch did not name names, but the new elite is not difficult to identify. A few years ago, Ralph Nader wrote to the executives of 100 giant U.S. corporations, suggesting how they might show their loyalty to 'the country that bred them, built them, subsidized them and defended them.' At the annual stockholders meeting, Ralph said, why not begin with a pledge of allegiance to the flag?

"Only one company responded favorably. Half did not respond at all. Many sent back angry letters declaring that they were not American companies at all. Motorola denounced the request as 'political and nationalistic.' Other companies likened the idea of a pledge of allegiance to loyalty oaths of the McCarthy era. Why were the heads of these corporations outraged? Because for years they have been trying to sever their bonds to the country of their birth.

"In 1997, the head of Boeing told one interviewer he would be delighted if, 20 years hence, no one thought of Boeing as an American company. My goal, said Phil Condit, is to 'rid [Boeing] of its image as an American group.'

"Back in the 1970's, Carl Gerstacker of Dow envisioned a day when Dow would be free of America. 'I have long dreamed,' he said, 'of buying an island owned by no nation and of establishing the World Headquarters of the Dow Company on the truly neutral ground of such an island, beholden to no nation or society.' A spokesman for Union Carbide agreed: 'It is not proper for an international corporation to put the welfare of any country in which it does business above that of any other.' In any test of loyalties, for such as these, the company comes before the country.

"Early in the 1970's, Zbigniew Brzezinski, later Jimmy Carter's national security advisor, wrote:

> A global consciousness is for the first time beginning to manifest itself . . . we are witnessing the emergence of transnational elites . . . composed of international businessmen, scholars, professional men and public officials. The ties of these new elites cut across national boundaries, their perspectives are not confined by national traditions . . . and their interests are more functional than national.

The one force that can derail the rise of this new elite, warned Zbig, is the 'politically activated masses,' whose 'nativism could work against the cosmopolitan elites.'

"Brzezinski knew that the creation of any New World Order would have to proceed by stealth. As Richard Gardner, Carter's ambassador to Italy, wrote in 1974: 'The "house of world order" will have to be built from the bottom up. An end run around national sovereignty, eroding it piece by piece, will accomplish much more than an old fashioned frontal assault.'

"Advancing on little cat's feet, they have done their work. By 1992, Mr. Clinton could appoint as Deputy Secretary of State his roommate from Oxford days who openly welcomed the death of nations and the coming of world government. Wrote Strobe Talbott:

> All countries are basically social arrangements. Within the next hundred years, nationhood as we know it will be obsolete. All states will recognize a single global authority. A phrase briefly fashionable in the mid 20th century, citizen of the world, will have assumed real meaning at the end of the 21st.

"Last year in Istanbul, Bill Clinton declared himself 'a citizen of the world.'

"This, then, is the millennial struggle that succeeds the Cold War: It is the struggle of patriots of every nation against a world government where all nations yield up their sovereignty and fade away. It is the struggle of nationalism against globalism, and it will be fought out not only among nations, but within nations. And the old question Dean Rusk asked in the Vietnam era is relevant anew: Whose side are you on?"

—from a speech delivered by Patrick J. Buchanan to the Boston World Affairs Council (January 6, 2000)

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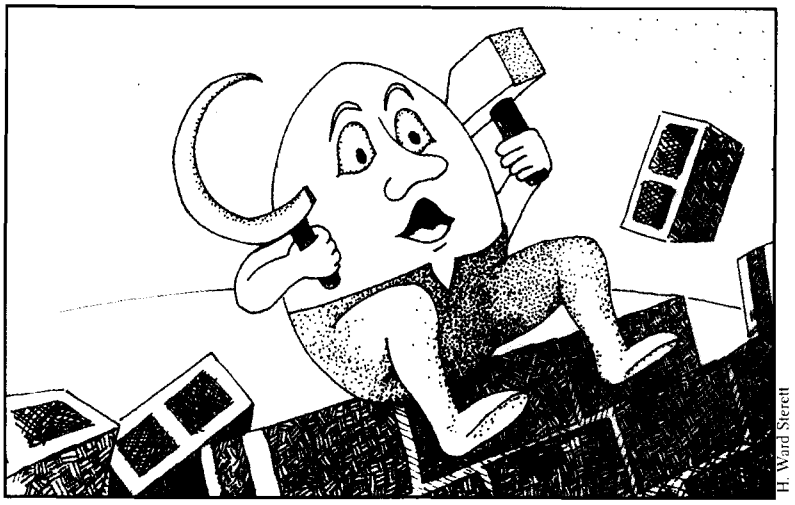
Beyond Left and Right

The New Face of the Antiwar Movement

by Justin Raimondo



November 9, 1989, marked the end of the old politics and the old alignments; on that day, as the Berlin Wall fell, so did the political categories and alliances of half a century. The end of the Cold War meant a lot more than the end of communism as a viable ideology. It meant more than the implosion of the Soviet Empire: Here in the United States, it also meant the end of anticommunism as a viable ideology and the implosion of the old conservative coalition that governed America in the 80's. It meant the breakup of the right, as well as the left—since both had, in large part, defined themselves in relation to something that no longer existed.

Of course, this process did not happen immediately; it is still working itself out. But today the great realignment has progressed far enough so that we can begin to see the broad outlines of a new political landscape. I often refer to the War Party, a phrase that is shorthand for that complex of social, political, and economic forces that constitute a permanent and powerful lobby on behalf of imperialism and militarism. In my very first column for *Antiwar.com*, I described it as "the war propaganda apparatus maintained by the interventionist lobby. Well-funded and well-connected, the War Party is such a varied and complex phenomenon that a detailed description of its activities, and its vast system of interlocking directorates and special interests, both foreign and domestic, would fill the pages of a good-sized book." I solved the problem of how to present this material in the form of a daily column by focusing on specific individuals, the biggest and most vocal supporters of the Kosovo war, from Madeleine Albright to Vanessa Redgrave to Jeane Kirkpatrick. These three Harpies of the Apocalypse pretty much represented the ideological contours of the War Party during the Kosovo conflict: Clinton Democrats, hard leftists, and neoconservatives.

The hard leftists, former peaceniks like Todd Gitlin, naturally rallied 'round the flag when Clinton declared that this was a war against "racism" and for "diversity." The Clintonians, for their part, were happy to divert attention from the fact that their leader had turned the White House into the heterosexual equivalent of a gay bathhouse. But the neoconservatives—that merry little band of ex-lefties who left the Democratic Party in the 1970's and 80's over its lack of enthusiasm for the Cold War—were the most bloodthirsty of the whole sorry lot. Bill Kristol, the editor of the *Weekly Standard*, openly called for "crushing Serb skulls" in a famous editorial a full year before the bombs began to fall on Belgrade. Opportunists like John McCain sought to climb on the "kill the Serbs" bandwagon out of their instinct for the main chance, but the hardcore ideologues of the War Party were the neocons. While the Clintonians served up bromides about "humanitarianism" and "diversity" to justify the war, theirs was at most a halfhearted effort: After all, if you are bombing television stations and raining death on a civilian population, it becomes increasingly hard to pass yourself off as Mother Teresa.

Only the neocons had a clear ideological agenda, and Kristol's remark about "crushing Serb skulls" pretty much expresses what it means in practice. In theory, however, it is much more high-sounding, and I must admire Kristol and his coauthor

Justin Raimondo writes from San Francisco. This is an edited version of his speech to the Second Annual Antiwar.com *conference.*

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Robert Kagan for their effort to dress up a barbaric doctrine in language that sounds almost like it might have been written by a civilized human being. In the Summer 1996 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Kristol and Kagan outline what they call a "neo-Reaganite" foreign policy. Conservatives, it seems, have been "adrift" in the realm of foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. Up until November 9, 1989, the role of the United States in world affairs had been defined by the alleged threat posed by the Soviet Union. Now that the Soviets are gone, however, the question arises: "What should that role be?" Kristol and Kagan have an answer:

> Benevolent global hegemony. Having defeated the "evil empire," the United States enjoys strategic and ideological predominance. The first objective of U.S. foreign policy should be to preserve and enhance that predominance by strengthening America's security, supporting its friends, advancing its interests, and standing up for its principles around the world. The aspiration to benevolent hegemony might strike some as either hubristic or morally suspect. But a hegemon is nothing more or less than a leader with preponderant influence and authority over all others in its domain. That is America's position in the world today. The leaders of Russia and China understand this. At their April summit meeting, Boris Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin joined in denouncing "hegemonism" in the post-Cold War world. They meant this as a complaint about the United States. It should be taken as a compliment and a guide to action.

This vision of world domination goes way beyond hubris, crossing the border into outright megalomania. It reminds me of all those terrible science-fiction movies, where the goal of the mad scientist or the evil space beings is always to conquer the world. For the authors of this manifesto of empire, however, what most normal people would consider villainous is, instead, virtuous. As the architects of "national greatness conservatism," Kristol and his cabal naturally want to export that "greatness" to the rest of the world. It is the old Marxism turned inside out: "Democratic revolution" must be exported to the far corners of the globe.

While the neocon theoretician Francis Fukuyama deploys the Hegelian dialectic to show that history has ended in the birth of what he calls the "universal homogenous state," the *Weekly Standard* and neocon columnists and editorial writers beat the war drums continuously and ever more loudly: They want all-out war against Serbia, Iraq, Russia, China, North Korea, and who knows how many other so-called "rogue states." (Austria may very well be next.) Of course, by the neocon definition, any state that does not recognize American supremacy, that does not kowtow and surrender its sovereignty to the West, is a "rogue state." Neoconservatism is an ideology that *has* to have perpetual war.

The War Party is not unitary: It is riven into various factions, with ostensibly "left" and "right" wings. Some, like Kristol and Kagan, want the United States to assume a frankly imperial stance, acting unilaterally to achieve global dominance. Others, the "left" imperialists, see the United States acting through the United Nations or some other multilateral institution. Both see the emergence of a global state, centered in the West, as inevitable and desirable. The only argument is over how to bring this about. Each wing has regional preferences in terms of the enemies it chooses, with the "left" concentrating on Europe while the "right" has always focused on the Asian theater of operations. But that is a whole other subject: Suffice it to say that we are talking about two versions of essentially the same poison. Bill Kristol, affecting a macho stance, is enraptured by his vision of "crushing Serb skulls," while Clinton and his enablers pose as great "humanitarians"—even as they bomb one of the oldest cities in Europe from the cowardly height of 50,000 feet.

So we have a War Party that spans the very narrow spectrum of the politically permissible, from the neoliberal "left" to the neoconservative "right"—with anything and everything that falls outside of these parameters exiled to the so-called "fringe." Of course, when the "mainstream" is defined so narrowly, millions of Americans find themselves on the "fringe." This is the great dream of the neocons: to lop off the fringes and institute the rule of the Eternal Center, where dissent is nonexistent—especially in the realm of foreign policy.

It is very clever how they have gone about their deliberate campaign to marginalize any and all opposition to the globalist idea. But any attempt to suppress opposition is bound, instead, to stimulate it—and that was the reason for the recent *Antiwar.com* conference, and all the conferences to come: to mobilize the party of peace. The first step of that mobilization is to recognize who we are, and where we are coming from. The Peace Party, though less organized—and far less generously funded—represents a far greater number of Americans, most of whom are instinctual isolationists. The American people have had to be dragged, kicking and screaming, into virtually every war in their history, and the end of the Cold War has encouraged this natural isolationism.

But this opposition to foreign adventurism usually arises only *after* we actually go to war. Active opposition to interventionism *in between* wars has been limited to the "far" left and the "far" right. We have the remnants of the Old Left, whose best elements are represented by a man like Alexander Cockburn—and whose worst aspects are exemplified by the neo-Stalinist robots of the Workers World Party, whose "International Action Center" painted the opposition to the Kosovo war as a wacko sideshow far better than the War Party ever could.

It is on the right, however, that the most interesting developments have taken place, for until the end of the Cold War, there were very few antiwar rightists. Until recently, the long tradition of anti-imperialism on the right was almost completely forgotten. Yet the old America First Committee, founded by rock-ribbed conservatives and opponents of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1940, was the biggest and best-organized antiwar movement in American history. The fight to keep us out of the European war was led by such Roosevelt-haters as John T. Flynn and such editorial bastions of Midwestern Middle Americanism as the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. Their analysis—that we would win the war against national socialism in the trenches but lose the battle for liberty on the home front—was largely borne out by events. Garet Garrett, chief editorial writer for the *Saturday Evening Post*, warned in 1950 that "we have crossed the boundary that lies between Republic and Empire"—but by then, not many were listening. Only a few, notably Murray N. Rothbard, the libertarian economist and theoretician, carried on the Old Right tradition. By the mid-60's, the so-called "New Right" of William F. Buckley, Jr., and *National Review* had taken over the conservative movement almost completely, along with a crew of ex-leftists

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such as James Burnham (a former leader of the Fourth International) and a whole coven of ex-commies of one sort or another, who were hell-bent on destroying their ex-comrades in the Kremlin.

If we look at the parallel histories of the War Party and the Party of Peace, we can see a whole series of such realignments, starting with World War I and its aftermath. The crusading spirit of the War Party of 1917 was animated by Wilsonian liberalism, a militant internationalism of the left. These same liberals, however, were cruelly disillusioned by the vengeance of Versailles and the subsequent redivision of Europe by the Great Powers. This great betrayal gave rise to a new, noninterventionist liberalism, which found political expression in the Midwestern populists of both parties (primarily the Republicans). Exemplified by Sen. William E. Borah, the great orator known as the "Lion of Idaho," this group constituted the Midwestern leadership of the antiwar movement of the 1930's. These progressive Republicans were initially friendly to Franklin Roosevelt, but were alienated by the Mussolini-esque National Recovery Act, horrified by the court-packing scheme, and bitterly opposed to getting into the European war, which they saw as a conflict between empires in which the republican United States had no interest and no stake. American intervention in the war, they believed, was a scheme by the President to increase his power and to plant his foot firmly on the neck of the nation.

In this suspicion, they had plenty of company in conservative businessmen such as Gen. Robert E. Wood, the head of Sears, Roebuck, and a group of Yale law students led by R. Douglas Stuart, the son of the first vice president of the Quaker Oats Company. This working alliance, based on opposition to a common enemy, soon arrived at a common analysis of America in the 1930's: that Roosevelt was a warmongering would-be dictator who was taking the country down the path to perdition. While opposition to the President's domestic policies formed some basis for the alliance, the war question was the real catalyst of the 1930's realignment—as it has been of realignments throughout American history.

Over on the left, another sort of realignment was taking place, with the formerly antiwar Communist Party turning on a dime: The signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact had motivated its opposition to intervention, but when Hitler turned on his twin brother in the Kremlin, Stalin's American agents changed their line in mid-sentence—and without missing a beat. Suddenly, the commies were the biggest warmongers on the block, stridently demanding that the United States open up a "second front" to save the Soviet Union, and insisting that all opponents of the war be jailed as "traitors"—*this* from a party funded and directly controlled by a foreign power, a party that now billed communism as the incarnation of "20th-century Americanism"!

The communists had been on the outs with their liberal friends and potential fellow travelers on the war question, but as soon as the commies were pro-war, they were let into the government and the seats of power. Communists hailed the passage of the Smith Act, which criminalized opposition to the war, and cheered when Roosevelt jailed some 30 members of the Socialist Workers Party, which opposed the war. A few years later, the same law was used to jail leaders of the Communist Party—which demonstrates how the principle of karma operates in history.

The War Party has worn many guises throughout American history. Sometimes it is left wing, at other times it is a creature of the right. The Party of Peace is likewise prone to switch polarities. If you live long enough, you can start out your life as a liberal and wind up a right-wing reactionary without undergoing any fundamental change of views. That is what happened to H.L. Mencken, the guru of the freethinking "flaming youth" of the 1920's and early 30's, who was later consigned to the fever swamps of "right-wing extremism" for his opposition to the war and his visceral hatred of Roosevelt. The same was true of Albert Jay Nock and John T. Flynn: Their views did not change, but the perception of them did. Opposition to war, imperialism, and the centralized state was "left" at the turn of the century and "right" by the 1930's. In the 1960's, it was "radical"—that is, radical left—to oppose our policy of global intervention, whereas the noninterventionist of today is far more likely to be a conservative Republican or a member of the Reform Party than a liberal Democrat.

The idea of an alliance between the antiwar left and the anti-imperialist right is a concept rooted in more than just opposition to war. For out of the struggle against empire will arise a whole new way of looking at the world, a common analysis of how the few use the state to rule the many. Naturally, there will be disagreements, and competing analyses, and a lot of initial confusion; but over the long haul, the two sides will sort themselves out. A movement in opposition to imperialism must, in this day and age, necessarily become a struggle against globalism, against the idea of a world state. In the era of enforced globalization, the Peace Party is the greatest defender of national sovereignty as a bulwark of resistance against the emerging transnational tyranny, while the War Party is the great champion of a world without borders. Now that the epic battle between communism and capitalism has been decisively decided in favor of the latter, a new struggle of "isms" is breaking out, this time between globalism and nationalism—and Kosovo was just the beginning.

As the rule of the acronyms—WTO, NATO, E.U., U.N.—replaces the self-rule of sovereign nations, a broad opposition is sure to arise. Who can say whether it will be "right" or "left"—and, in the end, what does it matter? Such labels no longer describe anything meaningful—and that, really, is the whole point. c

On Progressivism

by Robert Beum

Future means older: here we trudge,
Equal and free, to vote for Fudge;
Under the princes ran a host
Raiding imagination's coast.

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A More Perfect Union?

Building the United States of the World

by Philip Jenkins

H. Ward Sterett

"At present, the United Nations closely resembles the American nation under the Articles of Confederation (1781-1789). The inherent problems with that system demonstrated the need for 'a more perfect Union,' which was duly accomplished with the signing of the United States Constitution. And just as Confederation led to true American federalism, so the UN is the precursor of a true United States of the World."

If that analogy seems strained or even frightening, perhaps we should not worry too much about it, because the preceding passage only reflects the views of a tiny but well-financed pressure group called the World Federalist Alliance. The WFA expressed its opinions in a full-page advertisement published this past February in the *New York Times* and other papers, under a beaming and somewhat inane portrait of the group's president and CEO, former presidential candidate John Anderson. Because of the particular event which called forth their prophecy, however, the WFA cannot simply be dismissed as a bunch of cranks. The WFA manifesto was directly inspired by a speech by President Clinton which, although virtually ignored by the mainstream press, contained a remarkable and wildly ambitious description of a new global federalism which is incompatible with any present notion of American sovereignty. And while American conservatives have long dreaded the erosion of sovereignty by means of various international conspiracies, the most perilous feature of the new vision is that Americans will be drawn ever more deeply into foreign wars and entanglements in pursuit of an unattainable global hegemony. Though nobody is seriously debating such proposals in any democratically elected legislature, legal and diplomatic developments over the last decade have gone very far toward making these "federalist" dreams a practical reality, and the lack of outrage is startling.

What exactly did Clinton say? The speech in question was given in October 1999 at the Forum of Federations Conference in Mont-Tremblant, Canada, and his major theme was "Federalism." Given the venue, and the presence of many Canadian politicians, Clinton's audience paid the most attention to his comments on the Canadian situation, and the relationship between the province of Quebec and the nation's federal government. He was widely quoted as defending the constitutional *status quo*. The American experience, he argued, proved the virtues of federalism. So far, so good, but he also made some surprisingly broad references which delighted the WFA. He declared:

> I personally believe that you will see more federalism rather than less in the years ahead, and I offer, as exhibit A, the European Union. It's really a new form of federalism, where the States—in this case, the nations of Europe—are far more important and powerful than the federal government, but they are giving enough functions over to the federal government to sort of reinforce their mutual interest in an integrated economy and in some integrated political circumstances. In a way, we've become more of a federalist world when the United Nations takes a more active role in stopping genocide in places in which it was not involved, and we recognize mutual responsibilities to contribute and pay for those things.

Clinton seemed to be speaking positively of a global situation in which individual states gave up power to supranational au-

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thorities in order to integrate political and economic development. Also, it is clear from the context that this happy process of forming new multistate leviathans was not merely to be confined to Europe, Canada, or Africa, but that this emerging "federalist world" would include the United States, which (according to Clinton's worldview) had just led the way in preventing "genocide" in Kosovo. Taking him at his word, he was speaking overtly of a United Nations reconfigured with the vast intrusive regulatory powers of the present-day European Community, that deeply unloved and unlovely octopus currently smothering the national currencies of the individual nations under its sway. (Is that where he sees NAFTA heading?) Thankfully, he did not suggest that the United States might be drawn into a new global federation "to provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare," and other evocative phrases which would have ignited a firestorm in the United States.

The most interesting feature of Clinton's speech was his vision of how nations would be induced to accept some kind of federalism, namely, through common opposition to "genocide" and, by extension, to the glaring misdeeds of other bandit nations worldwide. The WFA likewise demands a world government "to adequately address global concerns such as genocide, terrorism, and environmental pollution." In the 1990's, the most powerful argument for integrating U.S. policy into a global "federalist" whole was this notion of joint action against the perceived abuses of small states, action which all too often was undertaken almost exclusively by American forces.

In this context, the concept of genocide is wonderfully useful, not least because it is so flexible. The word itself is so potent that it is all too likely to score an instant knockdown: Country X, we are told, is committing genocide against its people; therefore, we are intervening militarily. How can you oppose such a proposition? Criticizing the venture leads to supplementary questions of the have-you-stopped-beating-your-wife variety: "So you support genocide?" Or even sleazier, "So you would not have tried to save the Jews from Hitler in 1942?"

The problem is that the term "genocide" can be extended almost without limit. When, in 1994, the Rwandan Hutu tried systematically to eradicate their Tutsi neighbors through large-scale massacres, that fit the description of genocide by most accounts, but Clinton is evidently not referring to that affair, because the United Nations conspicuously did not intervene or "take a more active role" in that unhappy country. He must be referring to the Balkans, namely to Kosovo and to the 1995 events in Srebrenica, when several thousand Bosnians were allegedly wiped out by Serbian militias. Though the event is commonly invoked to justify military intervention in other confrontations worldwide, Srebrenica is best seen as one atrocity among many committed by all sides in the convoluted events of the Balkan wars of the 90's, and its use as a prime example of genocide is stark testimony to the devaluation of that word in recent political rhetoric.

"Global federalism" therefore implies international military action against sovereign states not in cases of true genocide, but in any confrontation in which civilians are being killed and the corporate news media have decided to demonize one particular side. Once that decision has been made, there is literally no limit to the possible expansion of the genocide concept: Think back over the past 30 years or so, and recall how the United States was accused of committing "genocide" in Vietnam; the Israelis, in Lebanon; the British, in Northern Ireland; American police, in urban ghettos; and so on, *ad nauseam*. Remember, several years back, how the CIA was supposedly using crack cocaine and AIDS to commit genocide of black Americans? There is real genocide—thankfully, very rare indeed in modern history—and there is the type of rhetorical "genocide" which basically implies that a given party is doing something to which its enemies wish to give the worst possible stigma.

Clinton's federalism therefore implies an aggressive and indiscriminate interventionism of a sort which is also exemplified by liberal commentators such as Michael Ignatieff. This past February, Ignatieff published an op-ed in the *New York Times* entitled "The Next President's Duty to Intervene." His key point was that, with increasing regularity, public attention was being drawn to situations worldwide in which very bad things were happening: genocide, ethnic cleansing, and human-rights violations, with Rwanda and Srebrenica offering the starkest recent examples. Any consideration of presidential candidates thus had to begin with the question of which of them would be most likely to send in the bombers and the Marines once the distressing images had started appearing on CNN. The bombers would be under appropriately multinational control, of course: It's so much more pleasant for the people of small nations to be massacred by planes with pretty blue U.N. insignia than the boring old red, white, and blue.

Moreover, this order has to be truly global, not just confined to regions of the world in which the United States has some kind of historical interest, lest cynics charge that human rights only matter when the humans in question are rich and white. For Ignatieff, the idea of intervening only to defend American strategic or economic interests is a token of moral bankruptcy, a sign that we would be willing to abandon the Jews or Rwandans or Bosnians to their fate: We should be all the more eager to fight where there is no potential benefit or gain, in a kind of neo-Crusader ethic that seems more appropriate for a Superman comic book than for any practical foreign policy.

For "Rambo" Ignatieff, as for Clinton, the new world federalism means enforcing the whims of the United States and other major powers not just by overwhelming military might but by a steadily increasing apparatus of international law, manifested in war-crimes trials, international courts, and extraditions of "war criminals"—in other words, of anyone who has made himself obnoxious to U.S. policymakers and media executives. The more states fight side by side, the more they will seek to enforce common standards and concepts of human rights, and the more they will realize their common share in a global civilization, which inevitably will be reflected in common political and legal institutions. Though the memory of NATO military attacks on Yugoslavia and other small nations is appalling enough, the emerging system of international political crime is, if anything, still more frightening. As in the case of genocide, what are being combated in these settings are not just atrocities, but violations of what American and European elites happen at a particular moment to view as human rights.

But what exactly are those rights? If civilians are being massacred by the tens of thousands, most of us would agree that war crimes are being committed, that human rights are being violated; but it behooves us to pay attention to developments at the cutting edge of liberal legal thought. Within the last decade, feminist activists have succeeded in vastly expanding the notion of "gender rights," so that rape and denial of women's equal status are now presented as on a par with actual massacre. Already, the United States has changed its immigration law to permit po-

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litical asylum for someone whose gender rights are violated (for instance, when women are facing the prospect of genital mutilation). Currently, both religious and feminist activists are trying to extend the same definition to any woman, anywhere, who is involved in prostitution, on the principle that all prostitutes are pursuing their careers under duress and are thus a species of sex slave. Just this year, the United Nations has begun including full-time advocates of children's rights in all of its international peacekeeping missions, to ensure that proper (Western) standards are imposed globally.

How long will it be before the United States and the Western European powers start imposing their standards on the nations which trample these supposed "rights"? It takes only a slight stretch of the imagination to see traditionally minded countries stigmatized as outlaws because they deny gay rights or women's legal equality; because their age of sexual consent is too low (or too high); because they permit the corporal punishment of children, or fail to prevent teenagers from using tobacco or alcohol: And if any of those ideas sound preposterous, imagine the derision which the notion of gender rights would have evoked 20 or 30 years back. If the errant governments are not actually being bombed into submission (and never rule that out), then their assets could be seized, their officials arrested or harassed, and their economies subjected to sanctions. The new global federalism would, in effect, mark a revival of the most aggressive models of Victorian imperialism, though without the moral or religious ideals which justified that movement. "Global community" and "global federalism" are euphemisms for a military-backed power cartel of the most aggressive kind—and, ultimately, of Pax Americana.

At this point, we might recall what happened to the last effort at world imperialism, as the tendency by individual powers to enforce their will in every odd corner of the globe led to ever-increasing rivalries and conflicts with other major nations, culminating in the apocalyptic breakdown of the Old World Order in 1914. Well-intentioned or not, military interventions and "surgical" strikes have a bad habit of degenerating into bloody local wars, which in turn can turn into much bigger affairs. The more the United States becomes involved in "peacekeeping" ventures in defense of human rights and efforts to suppress "genocide," the more likely it is that American forces will run into real bloodshed. The next Rwanda, the next Kosovo, will not necessarily be bloodless walkovers.

The ultimate nightmare is that well-meaning intervention will run up against a people who have not heard of global federalism, who have not yet decided to abandon all claims to sovereignty, and who will fight like hell to preserve their nationhood. To understand what this might look like, recall the occasion in 1993 when U.S. forces, in the service of the United Nations, attempted a "surgical" removal of a local warlord from his stronghold in the heart of Mogadishu. When the mission began to go wrong, the city's people turned out in the tens of thousands to defeat the invader, some with Kalashnikovs, some with ancient shotguns, most with sticks and stones, and all prepared to lay their lives on the line to save their ruined nation. In the ensuing firefight, about a thousand Somalis and 18 Americans perished, along with U.S. policy in the Horn of Africa. (Read the excellent account in Mark Bowden's depressing book, *Black Hawk Down*.) Now imagine the next time a "surgical" project of this sort goes wrong, and we are dealing not with poorly armed and underfed Somalis, but with a better armed and more technologically advanced power which might defend itself with biological, chemical, or nuclear weaponry. There will be abundant opportunities for Al Gore to deliver one of his famous funeral orations, informing yet more bemused parents how their sons gave their lives in the service, not just of narrow nationalism, but of the United Nations.

* * *

MEMO TO INCOMING PRESIDENT: In order to build upon recent achievements in the field of human rights, why not intervene forcefully to defend the human rights of the women of Afghanistan, so cruelly oppressed by religious fanaticism? It would be a stirring assertion of gender solidarity if the first U.N. forces on the ground were women Rangers or Special Forces, and maybe we could place a woman general in overall command: The news media would adore a Norma Schwarzkopf figure. The intervention itself should be a walkover, since the CIA assures us that the Afghans are a primitive people, unlikely to offer any serious resistance. . . .

* * *

To use a really unpopular analogy, does anyone remember a quondam superpower called the Soviet Union? Remember, too, the absolute height of its power and influence around 1975-76, after the strategic policy of its American rival lay in ruins following the fall of Saigon? At that point, the Soviets decided to extend their military power to support communist regimes in Africa, Asia, and Central America; in other words, to project their moral and political vision across the globe. It was only a matter of time before one of these quixotic ventures turned very, very bad, and the ensuing Afghan war more or less destroyed the Soviet state. One global empire down—and one to go?

I never thought I would say this, but Michael Ignatieff is absolutely right. In the coming months, it is imperative to know what presidential candidates think about their "duty to intervene," their readiness to support the global community, their willingness to send in the bombers anywhere across the globe in pursuit of truth, justice, and CNN viewers. Where I differ from Ignatieff, of course, is in the answer I want to hear. Any candidate who supports using the American Armed Forces to support woolly notions of "human rights" and international law enforcement is a public menace, and does not deserve to be taken seriously. c

A Definition

by Robert Beum

Democracy: a mall and parking place
Once green, where knights and poets had said grace.

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"All the News Unfit to Print"

Signs of the Times

Vol. 2 No. 7 July 2000

While we yield to no one when it comes to disdain for Fidel Castro and contempt for Bill Clinton, we also believe in the rule of law and in the right of parents to take care of their children. From the notion that parents' rights depend on a child's "best interest" as determined by a government agency, it is but a short step to mandatory foster homes for the children of homeschoolers, evangelical Christians, and social and cultural traditionalists. A *New York Press* editorial (April 27) provided an important postscript to the Elian Gonzalez affair:

> What's more notable at this point is the orgy of shamelessness and dishonesty that the administration's actions . . . have generated among politicians. Rudolph Giuliani . . . opined that the government should have stayed its hand and exhausted all legal options before launching a raid. Here . . . is a mayor whose police force has been authorized to search and harass citizens at will—a mayor who's reflexively hostile to civil liberties and almost neurotically enamored of state power—criticizing Federal agents.

The so-called left has been just as mendacious. Jesse Jackson and other "civil rights" activists who scream bloody murder every time a New York police officer so much as looks cross-eyed at a thug of color have suddenly become supporters of law enforcement and militant defenders of family values:

> For the "left," violence isn't violence when it fulfills the agenda of its yuppie-authoritarian friends in power. And for the right, government savagery's to be denounced for gain in the short-term, even as conservatives' punitive law-and-order agenda foments that violence the rest of the year. Maybe, under the circumstances, Elian . . . would be better off in Cuba after all.

The same hypocrisy evident in domestic issues extends to this administration's foreign policy, particularly on nuclear weapons. The *Hindustan Times* (April 29) expressed dismay at the U.S. desire to upgrade its own nuclear weapons while violating treaties by setting up a National Missile Defense (NMD) system, even as the administration lectures other nations about the dangers of these weapons:

> It passes comprehension why the US, with two oceans on either side, should feel the need to have a defence shield to protect it from unnamed rogue states when it cannot see the threat which India faces with two collaborating nuclear powers on its borders. . . . The US may disingenuously claim that it is frustrated at the lack of progress towards a nuclear-free world . . . but its contribution towards legitimising these doomsday weapons by giving them an aura of power and prestige is enormous.

The price tag for NMD is likely to reach some $60 billion by 2015, four times the original estimate, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. Their report also warned that any country capable of developing long-range missiles could use simple countermeasures to render NMD useless.

There's a juicy story here for an investigative journalist—exposing the many technical and legal flaws in the NMD, exploring the links between the arms procurement lobby, the White House, and some key congressmen . . . But journalists know that they win Pulitzers by pandering to the received wisdom of the ruling elite, while really interesting news remains unfit to print. Take the story of the mines in Kosovo, worth many billions of dollars, which the "international community" wants to steal from the Serbs. According to a KFOR press release (March 25):

> KFOR was allowed to play a part in the reconstruction of the Stari Trg Mine just east of Mitrovica. KFOR Polish soldiers were able to provide mining uniforms with hard hats and other safety equipment . . . to the director of the Stari Trg Mine, Mr. Burhan Kavaja[, who] has 250 men working for him . . . At the moment, UNMIK has the administrative responsibility [for] all the mining resources in Kosovo, and when there is profit from the mines, the profit will stay in Kosovo to be a valuable asset to the reconstruction of the region.

What the press release does not say is that Kavaja is an ethnic Albanian who illegally took over the mine after his 250 men killed or cleansed every last Serb from the Stari Trg area. Nor does it say that the mine is owned by the Serbs, who have a joint venture agreement with a Greek mining firm to develop the mine.

Almost two years ago, Chris Hedges published an article in the *New York Times* in which he pointed out that the real issue in Kosovo was control of the Trepca/Stari Trg mining complex. Hedges quoted "Burhan Kavaja, an Albanian," as declaring that the Kosovo conflict would only end "with [Albanian] independence."

> "There is over 30 percent lead and zinc in the ore," said Novak Bjelic, the mine's beefy director. "The war in Kosovo is about the mines, nothing else. This is Serbia's Kuwait—the heart of Kosovo. . . . And in addition to all this Kosovo has 17 billion tons of coal reserves. Naturally, the Albanians want all this for themselves . . . "

A month before the KFOR-supervised

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distribution of equipment to Kavaja's Albanian squatters at the mine, Diana Johnstone predicted it all in an amply documented article ("Taking over the Trepca mines: plans and propaganda"). She examined a November 1999 International Crisis Group (ICG) paper on the Trepca mining complex and a February 23, 2000, article in the *Toronto Star* by ICG consultant Susan Blaustein. Both called on UNMIK, headed by Bernard Kouchner, to cut through legal disputes over the industry's ownership and take over Trepca itself. The ICG is a think tank founded in 1995 and bankrolled by financier George Soros. It "provides policy guidance to governments" involved in the NATO-led reshaping of the Balkans. Its key figure is Morton Abramowitz, a proponent of NATO's "humanitarian intervention" and a sponsor of Kosovo Albanian separatists. The human rights of ethnic Albanians would be assured by stealing property worth billions of dollars: "The return to work of even a few hundred Kosovar miners would represent, for all Kosovars, the reclaiming of their patrimony." But as Johnstone notes, the ICG's love for the Albanians may be less than perfect:

> Simply handing Trepca over to the Kosovars is ruled out by the shortage of modern skills available locally, the need for internationally-verifiable standards to avoid corruption, as well as damage to the installations. "The social impact of the reduced work force would need to be balanced against the need for competitively based private investment," the ICG observes. Fortunately, the ICG finds that the young leadership of the "Kosovo Liberation Army" is "somewhat impatient" with the older Kosovo Albanian leadership group's interest in "a huge workforce" and prefers modernization that will require foreign investment capital.

Last year's NATO war against the Serbs was not "all about the mines." It was, above all, about the desire of the ruling elite to use the Balkans as a testing ground for the emerging postnational global empire of their dreams. But if a fast billion or two can be made in the process by Mr. Soros and his ilk, so much the better. They and their courtier press predictably remained quiet when Kosovo Albanians bombed a Serbian church on Orthodox Good Friday. That story was picked up by Mary Mostert (*www.originalsources.com*) on May 1:

> It was almost exactly 4 years ago . . . that America was "stirred to action" because of a rash of arson attacks on black churches in the South. Although at least a couple of those churches turned out to be targeted by black people . . . just the thought of minority churches being burned to the ground . . . was enough for bipartisan House and Senate . . . resolutions condemning the church burnings . . . Clinton said at the time, "It's hard to think of a more depraved act of violence than the destruction of a place of worship."

Thus, Mary Mostert argues, one would have expected him to say something about the destruction of Serbian churches:

> Some of those churches were historic landmarks that were more than 500 years old. On April 28th, Orthodox Good Friday, a time bomb set by Albanian terrorists blew up St. Petka Church in the village of Grncar in Kosovo. . . . It is in the region controlled by the American KFOR troops, whose main purpose should be protection of Serbs and their property . . . And all we hear from Bill Clinton is that the Albanians are merely "retaliating" against the Serbs.

The ultimate domestic consequence of Clinton's Kosovo policy may be the rise of ethnic separatist movements seeking the disintegration of the United States. On April 25, the *Albuquerque Tribune* published a fascinating article with a simple message: "Southwest shall secede from U.S." Charles Truxillo, a professor of "Chicano studies" at the University of New Mexico, suggests that *Republica del Norte* would be a good name for the new, sovereign "Hispanic" nation that he foresees straddling the current border between the United States and Mexico:

> The Republic of the North—he predicts its creation as "an inevitability"—would include all of the present U.S. states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, plus southern Colorado. Stretching from the Pacific to the Gulf of Mexico, it would also include the northern tier of several current Mexican states (Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas), and its capital would probably be Los Angeles.

But Professor Truxillo is not a simple analyst making an "objective" prediction. Although he does not repudiate violence, he regards a civil war as "unlikely;" the creation of the Republic of the North may be accomplished through the political process. The "electoral pressure" of the future Hispanic population throughout the region will be sufficient "not within the next 20 years but within 80 years":

> "I may not live to see the Hispanic homeland, but by the end of the century my students' kids will live in it, sovereign and free." Truxillo sees his chief task in developing a "cadre of intellectuals" who will start thinking about the practicalities of how the Republic of the North can become a reality. "It's not unfeasible as a premise—and a realistic possibility when you consider global geopolitical trends. It could happen with the support of the U.S. government . . . We will one day be a majority and reclaim our birthright by any means necessary—and we shouldn't shy away."

And so, while a wholesale migratory invasion proceeds unabated at home, Washingtonians drool over the emerging global empire of their dreams. By handing Kosovo over to the KLA, they have given the budding Latino separatist movement a strong argument that an ethnic group should be allowed to secede because of superior numbers. The Truxillos of this world sense—even if they don't quite understand—that the final fruit of empire is the death of the very people that takes the imperial path.

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A Letter From Earth

by George Garrett

"As fire is kindled by fire, so is a poet's mind kindled by contact with a brother poet."
—John Keble, *Lectures on Poetry, XVI*

James Dickey: The World as a Lie
by Henry Hart
New York: Picador;
811 pp., $35.00

Crux: The Letters of James Dickey
Edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli
and Judith S. Baughman
New York: Alfred A. Knopf;
575 pp., $35.00

The James Dickey Reader
Edited by Henry Hart
New York: Touchstone/
Simon & Schuster;
351 pp., $16.00

H. Ward Sterett

Dear Jimbo,

I am sending this c/o the Dead Poets Society. I hope it reaches you all right. Sure, it's doubtful, I know. But, then again, why not? About the afterlife . . . well, let's not get into a big argument about all that. I remember we used to argue sometimes about whether there was anyone else, besides ourselves, out there in the universe. You said we were all alone here. I said that statistically there were probably hundreds of James Dickeys out there writing poems at any given moment. I was only kidding. I do, however, believe in the afterlife. Even if I did not, I would strongly argue that all that wealth of energy (and you had enormous energy to waste and burn until your very last sad days!) can't just disappear. It seeks and probably finds a home place in this lonesome universe. And, to use somewhat less cosmic terms, your poems, the best of them and they are many, are still very much alive and, I venture, will continue to be as long as our beleaguered language lasts. Critics and reviewers can and do and will give you a full share of ups and downs. They can praise you or blame you. But it is way beyond their power and authority to strike or destroy a word of your lifework.

Lord, it's been years since I've been in touch with you. Ever since I bailed out of the University of South Carolina to go and live in our house in Maine (and to finish up a book or two), we seldom, if ever, wrote and only called briefly and on business. Met here and there a few times. I remember you introduced me—and a funny and generous introduction it was—when I came back to South Carolina to give a reading for the Thomas Cooper Society. We saluted each other at one or two meetings of the Fellowship of Southern Writers. And I had a chance to chat with you briefly at the Scott Fitzgerald Festival at USC in September 1996. You were pretty much confined to a wheelchair (a neat-looking blonde babe was pushing you around, of course), sucking on an oxygen tank (it failed once during lunch), and you looked frail and weary; but I honestly did not guess how close you were to dying. Sorry we didn't have a chance to talk more and maybe to swap a couple or three stories.

The purpose and occasion of this letter is to bring you up to date on a number of things. Mainly it is, or can be so called, a review of Henry Hart's biography of you. But there are other things, too, that deserve to be mentioned. Chris's book (*The Summer of Deliverance*, by Christopher Dickey) came out in 1998, got a lot of attention, and made its mark. It seems to have shocked some people with its picture of you in the years after *Deliverance*

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(1970), as self-destruction and disintegration followed hard on the heels of success. It was a good book, well written and well reported. He told a moving story from his point of view. His portrait of you, warts and all, anticipates and muffles at least some of the aftershocks that will inevitably follow Hart's more objective and thorough biography. Chris's book may help people to understand your story and better appreciate what Hart has done.

Things have been pretty busy since your death (January 19, 1997). The primary texts have been put together in *James Dickey: The Selected Poems* (Wesleyan, 1998), edited by Robert Kirschten; and in *The James Dickey Reader*, edited by biographer Henry Hart (and dedicated to your literary executor Matthew J. Bruccoli), including representative selections of your poetry, fiction, essays, and criticism. Also published in 1999 was *James Dickey*, the 19th volume of the Documentary Series of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, edited by Judith S. Baughman. Matthew J. Bruccoli and Miss Baughman are the editors of *Crux: The Letters of James Dickey*. Using roughly 20 percent of the available letters, the book adheres to the twofold logic of Bruccoli's assembly:

> The double rationale for selection was first to document the growth of a major writer . . . then, second to document the ways he fulfilled his genius and advanced his career. Jim was unabashedly a careerist.

Bruccoli is putting it nicely. What comes across in these letters is the portrait of a hard-driving literary hustler and con man, perfectly willing to say or to do almost anything to advance himself and to promote and enhance his public image. The evidence is right there, even in this mildly sanitized version, Jim, that you were willing to bootlick and ass-kiss any other poets, critics and reviewers, agents and editors, whenever deemed necessary, to embrace your enemies and betray old friends, in the constant search for jobs, fellowships, prizes, and awards, better deals with better publishers! Book reviewers made a good deal, maybe too much out of this. In the *New York Times* ("One Poet's Prosaic Correspondence," December 10, 1999) Michiko Kakutani opines that "a distressingly large portion is devoted to poetic politics: to snide putdowns of other poets, insider talk about prizes and fellowships, and catty remarks about rival cliques and claques." Similarly, poet and editor J.D. McClatchy (*New York Times Book Review*, December 19, 1999) assumes, in the trendy contemporary manner, a stance of high morality: "But most of the book is consumed by Dickey's literary resentments and intrigues, betrayals and backbiting. It's a sad and off-putting spectacle."

But negative reviews to the contrary, the letters in *Crux*, together with other letters quoted in Hart's biography, don't expose you as a carnival pitchman. Instead, they illustrate a shameful and ongoing period in our cultural history when even our poets, some of the best of them, were infected with the insidious virus of celebrity, aspiring to be elevated to that new American nobility of celebrity rock-and-rollers, slam-dunkers, breakdancers, and gangsta-rappers, a time when poets of several generations began to behave like packs of feral dogs, growling and snarling at each other, or submissively wagging their tails, in savage, unrelenting competition for crumbs and thin bones on the cultural garbage heap. You played the same game, from first to last, and you were better at it than most of the poets of your own generation. (You were a better poet than most of them, too.) You did not invent the game, but you certainly mastered it. One of the funniest scams you ran had to do with John Hall Wheelock's *Poets of Today* series (Scribner's), which published three first books bound together in a single volume. That is how your first book, *Into the Stone*, was published. But before that, you spent time flattering and honoring Wheelock while simultaneously bad-mouthing the series, in letters to several young poets, cleverly discouraging the competition.

It's a pleasure to watch how easily and deftly you could handle those guys. What a bunch of jerks!

Once, you and I had a serious talk about careerism and hustling. You said that, by dint of dedication and hard labor, we were sometimes given the glorious gift of maybe half a dozen poems (or stories or novels) that were touched with greatness. You said it was our bounden duty to be faithful to those gifts; that we must not allow what we had been given to disappear; that to be faithful we must be willing to take any risk, to do anything, not for the sake of ourselves and our large or small careers, but for the sake of what we had been given.

Looking at the younger poets coming along behind you, the young and the restless, I think you might be troubled by the way things have gone. Even in our deepest cynical moments of disillusion, I don't think we could (or would) have imagined a generation of poets who would squander their modest gifts, devoting themselves not to the discipline of contemplation or to creative art, but rather to crude manipulations and to shameless, ruthless self-aggrandizement. Names? You and I know who they are. Let interested readers examine the index and read the letters of *Crux*. Let them read Henry Hart's excellent biography—*James Dickey: The World as a Lie*.

Hart's biography is a long one, 811 pages, and it is going to bother a lot of people. (It may even trouble you, Jim, though I doubt it.) Has bothered some people already, well before publication. Your old buddy (and mine) Bill Starr of Columbia's *The State* reacted with shock and surprise ("Brutal biography may jolt devotees of Dickey's work," February 15, 2000). Bill doesn't criticize or quarrel with Hart's biography. But he is deeply troubled by the revealed content of your life:

> Hart's biography, subtitled "The Life and Lies of a Poet" [sic], charts Dickey's banal self-absorption and

LIBERAL ARTS

STOP ME BEFORE I SHOP AGAIN

"Compulsive buying is finally coming out of the closet. Although the study of this phenomenon is still in relative infancy compared with some of its psychological siblings—alcoholism, eating disorders, or drug abuse, for example—there is . . . evidence that it poses a serious and worsening problem with significant emotional, social, occupational, and financial consequences. . . . This collection [addresses] the biological, sociological, psychological, and spiritual issues that are bound up with compulsive buying."

—*from a press release for* I Shop, Therefore I Am: Compulsive Buying and the Search for Self *by April Lane Benson, Ph.D.*

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pathetic self-destruction in minute detail, which gradually becomes so revolting as to make reading a painful act.

Well, maybe . . . and maybe not.

I do think, though, that you would be pleased by what Hart has accomplished. He has interviewed large numbers of people who knew you from childhood to the end. He has followed the intricate paper trails, pursued every conceivable lead. The biggest problem facing him was that you almost never told the factual truth about anything. Hart had to sweep aside an enormous amount of misinformation and disinformation, mostly planted by you. Like a veritable minefield. All writers create, to a greater or lesser extreme, a dream autobiography, based on exaggeration, deepest wishes, or pure fantasy. It comes with the age and the territory, Jim, this great American con game of inventing or reinventing ourselves. After reading Hart's biography, I have to say that nobody in the literary world could ever match you in this liar's craft. You understood this from your brief (and incompetent) days in the advertising business, how easy it is for image to overwhelm and replace reality. How image-makers (poets in the art world, media in "real life") are the high and low priests of this secular religion. You turned your life, as Hart proves, into a good, if highly improbable story. The jock stuff, the combat stories, the hunting with bow and blowgun, the guitar playing, all of it proves to be either outright fabrication or at least radically different from what you claimed. And nobody cared. You were interviewed innumerable times and each time with a different story. It would have taken 15 minutes, a phone call or two, to check. No literary journalist did so. Nobody cared. It was a good story. More fun than most. Even Hart may have been reluctant to present the mundane facts lest he, and the reader, lose sight of the poetry. But in all this, poetry as well as factual accounting, Hart has done a fine job and a daring one.

Daring? In order to set the record straight and to balance against this his obvious admiration for your poetry, he had to write a long and detailed story, for which he will probably be faulted by many reviewers. His problem was not unlike that of Joseph Blotner and his initial biography of William Faulkner. He had to start from scratch and establish all the facts. He has done so. Hart is accurate, judicious, and thorough. Later versions of your life (and they will come along soon enough) will have to depend on this one. The great curses of biography in our age—psychobabble and judgmentalism—are amazingly absent. Disillusioned or not, Hart is fair, and his good judgment is not clouded. He maintains a clear, unobtrusive, and appropriate style; and he has managed some significant criticism, skillfully dealing with your work in its complex relationship with both your fictive and factual lives. He writes well about the poetry, especially the often ignored, intensely difficult, self-indulgent later poems. He follows the conception and gestation of the novels, which you thought about and toyed with most of your adult life. He places your literary criticism firmly in the context of the times. And, most surprising to me, he is able to say some interesting things about the coffee-table books you made money on during the last years of your life. He treats them seriously and demonstrates the validity of the proposition that everything by a major writer, large or small, slight or deadly serious, finally matters.

Are there any flaws? Of course. There are tales I heard (and told) differently. There are things I would interpret differently. And there are minor quibbles. For instance, I wish Hart, who is justly interested in sales and money, had distinguished between hardcover and paperback sales or had related your advances and earnings to those of your peers. You made a good deal of money, Jim, but not as much as some other writers I know. You blew most of it away. We could use a more comprehensive examination of your finances.

A final test. Even though I knew you pretty well for a while, I learned a lot about you that I didn't know then or later. Some things genuinely surprised me. Some things have given me a lot to think about. On the whole, Jim, my guess is that you would be pleased with a job well done and with the prospect that, in part because of this, you and your work will be the subjects of serious interest this year and, likely, for many years to come.

Best wishes from the first days of the new millennium.

Sincerely,

. George

c

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Military Messiah

by Jeffrey Meyers

Fire in the Night: Wingate of Burma, Ethiopia, and Zion
by John Bierman and Colin Smith
New York: Random House;
434 pp., $29.95

◆

Orde Wingate (1903-44), the most eccentric and innovative commander in World War II, was remarkably like his distant cousin Lawrence of Arabia. Both came from a guilt-ridden fundamentalist (Scots Presbyterian and Plymouth Brethren) background and grew up in an atmosphere of religious gloom and repression. Both were short and slight (5'6" and only 130 pounds), and had fair skin, blond hair, and piercing blue eyes. They compensated for their unimpressive physique by testing themselves and toughening their bodies through extreme physical hardship—but also luxuriated in hot baths. Lawrence was an expert rider of camels, Wingate of horses.

Deliberately unkempt, both flouted military regulations and were hostile to mindless custom and blimpish authority. Brilliantly learned, they paraded their knowledge (especially about the history of warfare) and had unorthodox opinions on everything. Combining outrageous egoism with a sly sense of humor, they had an obsessive need to provoke and irritate, to indulge in exhibitionism and showmanship. Lawrence dressed in Arab robes; Wingate wore an antiquated pith helmet, carried an alarm clock with a bell instead of a wristwatch, conducted meetings and wandered around hotels while naked. A comrade commented on Wingate's Jekyll-and-Hyde personality: "One is charming, kind, almost deprecating. The other is nothing short of tyrannical, overweening and despotic. His energy and forcefulness are quite incomparable."

Orde was related to Sir Reginald Wingate—High Commissioner in Cairo in the Great War, who had provided the gold that paid for Lawrence's Arabian campaign—and frequently used Sir Reginald to advance his career. Lawrence and Orde had done intelligence work in the Middle East; both knew Arabic, and Wingate also spoke Hebrew. They used guerrilla tactics and, always leading from the front, attacked railways, blew up bridges, and diverted enemy troops from the main campaign. Incredibly brave but not very likable, they had manic, even messianic self-confidence. They sometimes went berserk and justified their ruthless slaughter by the "morality of punishment." Wingate, defying regulations, often struck his officers across the face. Oddly enough, no one ever hit him back.

Both men were hero-worshiped by Winston Churchill and, when relatively junior officers, used their friendship with him to influence high-level decisions and change British policy in the Middle East. Churchill, acting on impulse, even took Wingate and his wife to the wartime Quebec conference; Wingate's posthumously born son was conceived on the voyage to Canada. As passionately pro-Zionist as Lawrence was pro-Arab, Wingate saw himself as an Old Testament warrior, like Gideon or Joshua, and formed a close friendship with Chaim Weizmann (as Lawrence had done with Prince Feisal). Wingate wanted to harness the forces of Zion to the British cause and built the core of the Israeli army by leading Jewish night patrols against Arab rebels in Palestine. More loyal to the Jews than to the British, he has always been greatly honored in Israel.

Both men took suicidal risks, died in accidental crashes in their 40's, and created heroic legends that Hollywood wanted to film. Like Lawrence, Wingate was (in the words of a colleague) "a military genius of a grandeur and stature seen not more than once or twice in a century." But, unlike the more diplomatic Lawrence, Wingate was hated by the military establishment for "his rebellious scorn, his arrogance, his paranoid touchiness, his reckless rudeness, his flouting of convention, his personal scruffiness, his leftish ideas and (dare one suggest it?) his strange obsession with Zionism and the Jews."

Orde Wingate was born in India in 1903, the son of a suspicious and pessimistic army officer. He spent four years at Charterhouse School and three at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich, and joined the Royal Artillery in 1923. After an intensive course in Arabic and service in the Sudan, he was posted to British-controlled Palestine, where his daring patrols (providing rigorous training for future generals like Moshe Dayan) marched all night to fight at dawn. In a classic "friendly fire" incident, he was wounded five times in the arms and legs by rounds from a Lewis gun that ricocheted off the flinty ground. After two years of fighting with the Night Squads, being wounded in battle, and narrowly escaping an attempt on his life, he was awarded a DSO. But he was considered politically unreliable and sent off to Ethiopia in the fall of 1940.

Wingate's next sacred mission, which he espoused as passionately as the Zionist cause, was to lead a popular rising against the Italian occupation of the country and restore Emperor Haile Selassie to the throne. Wingate's plan was to cut off and besiege the Italian garrisons in the Gojjam highlands and force them to surrender. Though outnumbered 20 to one, he defeated the Italians in his first pitched battle. He eventually drove them out of the country, achieving Britain's first major victory in the war, and in May 1941 triumphantly led the emperor into Addis Ababa. Instead of reaping the rewards, Wingate was again hustled out of the country (he didn't even attend the victory banquet) by superiors who feared he would meddle in local politics and use his influence in high places to oppose official policy. Overcome in Cairo by cerebral malaria, which intensified his depression, he stabbed himself on both sides of his neck but miraculously missed cutting the vital veins and arteries.

Wingate's expertise in guerrilla warfare propelled him to Burma just after the fall of Rangoon and the British retreat to India in March 1942. Supported by Churchill, he became head of all operations behind Japanese lines. Inspired by cavalry raids during the American Civil War, Wingate had his troops suddenly attack the enemy. If his force was surprised, he said, they "could disintegrate into smaller prearranged parties to baffle

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pursuit, and meet again at a rendezvous fifteen to twenty miles further on its route. Supply should be by air, communication by wireless: these two weapons had not yet been properly exploited."

In February 1943, Wingate took 3,000 men and 1,000 animals across the Chindwin River (inside Burma and flowing parallel to the Indian border) with the aid of ropes, inflatable dinghies, and makeshift rafts, without being detected. His principal target was the Japanese railroad that ran from Mandalay up to the Chinese border. After crossing the Irrawaddy (east of the Chindwin) and wreaking destruction along the way, he evacuated some of the wounded by air and struggled back through the jungle to India. Of the original force, only 2,182 survived. But the first Allied victory in Asia proved that British soldiers could defeat the Japanese on their own terrain, and Wingate was hailed as a hero in Burma and in England.

Promoted to major general, Wingate immediately began to plan the second Chindit expedition; in just five months, he managed to "raise, organize, equip, and train six long-range penetration brigades and get them into action before the onset of the 1944 monsoon." He brought in his men by gliders, suffering many accidents, and successfully attacked trains, ammunition dumps, river barges, highway traffic, and telegraph lines. In March 1944, ignoring his American pilot who warned that the plane's engine might fail, he crashed in the jungle. Deprived of his inspired leadership, his Special Force was disbanded early in 1945. In 1956, his old commanding officer, Lt. Gen. Sir William Slim, denigrated his achievements and damaged his reputation.

John Bierman and Colin Smith, two veteran British journalists, have produced a thoroughly researched, well-written, and dramatic narrative that moves along at a cracking pace (though they devote only one page to Wingate's four formative years at Charterhouse). Having examined all the evidence, they are properly skeptical of myths, rumors, and scandal. Bierman and Smith provide a useful epilogue on Wingate's reputation as well as on the fate of his family and friends, and offer a convincing analysis of his complex, quicksilver character.

Wilfred Thesiger—who fought under Wingate in Ethiopia, thought he deserved a knighthood for that campaign, and later became Lawrence's leading literary disciple—concluded (in a passage not quoted by the authors) that "Wingate was ruthlessly ambitious, yet his aims transcended personal ambition. He was an idealist and a fanatic. He needed a cause with which he could identify himself, but his intolerance and arrogance required him to be in command. He should have lived in the time of the Crusades." Wingate's astonishing career shows that great intelligence, personal courage, and victory in battle were not enough to secure his legendary reputation. The military hierarchy he offended was determined to defeat him after death.

Jeffrey Meyers will publish, this fall, a life of George Orwell (Norton), Privileged Moments: Encounters with Writers *(Wisconsin), and* Hemingway: Life into Art *(Cooper Square).*

A Collaborative Effort

by David B. Kopel

The Battle of New Orleans: Andrew Jackson and America's First Military Victory
by Robert V. Remini
New York: Viking; 226 pp., $24.95

"There was a time when the United States had heroes and reveled in them. There was a time when Andrew Jackson was one of those heroes, along with the men who stood with him at New Orleans and drove an invading British army back to the sea." So begins Robert Remini's *The Battle of New Orleans,* which attempts to recover the history of one of America's greatest heroes.

Before the War Between the States, the Battle of New Orleans was celebrated nearly on a par with Independence Day, each anniversary commemorating the triumph of American liberty over the British monarchy. Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans capped his campaigns against the British and the Indians in the Southeast, ensuring American control over the region. Without the new cotton-producing states of Mississippi and Louisiana, slavery might have withered in the 1830's and 40's, rather than expanding. It is understandable, therefore, that postbellum America lost interest in the events of 1815. But today, slavery is long gone from the United States. The time has come for Andrew Jackson and his brave army to reclaim their place in the American pantheon.

To the extent that junior high school history textbooks mention the Battle of New Orleans, they insist that it was irrelevant, since it was fought on January 8, 1815, and the Treaty of Ghent, ending the war, was signed on December 24, 1814. However, had the British captured New Orleans—upon which the economy of almost all of the Louisiana Territory depended—it is doubtful that they would have relinquished it, despite what the treaty stipulated. Indeed, the British had violated the Treaty of Paris, which ended the American Revolution, by refusing to evacuate their forts east of the Mississippi.

Before conveying the Louisiana Territory to the United States in 1803, France had acquired the territory from Spain in the 1800 Treaty of San Idelfonso. Under that treaty, Spain had the right of first refusal before France could sell the territory to any third party. The Louisiana Purchase was a plain violation of Spain's rights, and if Britain could have gained control of Louisiana it would have had a strong legal case for conveying the territory back to Spain.

There would have been more immediate consequences, too. As noted in the song "The Hunters of Kentucky" (celebrating the Battle of New Orleans, the song became the Jackson presidential campaign's theme song), New Orleans is "famed for wealth and beauty." British Gen. Packenham had promised his soldiers "beauty and booty"—meaning that they could rape the women and pillage the city.

The British army was fresh from its triumph over John McCain's childhood hero Napoleon: The forces invading New Orleans were veterans of the Peninsular Campaign in Spain. Against the best-trained, best-equipped army in the world, the Americans lacked even sufficient weapons. Remini quotes a contemporary observer: "From all the parishes the inhabitants could be seen coming with their hunting guns" because "there were not enough guns in the magazines of the United States to arm the citizens." The Tennessee militia, with their rough clothes, unshaven faces, and raccoon caps, hardly looked like a professional

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army. The Kentucky militia was even worse, arriving in rags and disappointed to find that there were no blankets in the city for them. The Redcoats called them "dirty shirts." Yet, as Remini explains, "most of these men could bring down a squirrel from the highest tree with a single rifle shot. Their many years living in the Tennessee wilderness had made them expert marksmen . . . " The ladies of New Orleans, meanwhile, armed themselves with daggers in case the men lost and the British rapists entered the city. When Andrew Jackson was a child, his mother had admonished him not to cry; crying, she told him, was for girls. When he asked what boys were for, she replied, "fighting." But at New Orleans, the women, too, were prepared to fight; not a single lady fled the city. Instead, they busied themselves with sewing, making new field blankets, shoes, shirts, and pants for the men.

If "diversity" really were highly valued in our schools (rather than being a code word for "hate America first"), then the Battle of New Orleans would be known by every student in the nation. The men who fought on January 8, 1815, were a magnificent combination of professional soldiers, militia, irregulars, free blacks, Creoles, Cajuns, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Germans, Italians, Indians, Anglos, lawyers, privateers, farmers, and shopkeepers. When objections were raised to arming the free blacks of Louisiana, Jackson replied: "place confidence in them, and . . . engage them by every dear and honorable tie to the interest of the country who extends to them equal rights and privileges with white men."

There were many heroes at New Orleans, not Jackson alone. When the British army captured the plantation belonging to Gabriel Villeré, he made a sudden break, fleeing with British soldiers close behind yelling, "Catch him or kill him." Concealed in an oak tree, he was forced to kill a favorite dog which had followed him in order to prevent it from revealing his hiding place. Villeré eventually reached a neighboring plantation, hastily rowed upriver, and conveyed the news that the British army had arrived. After the British landing, Jackson spent four nights without sleep, as he rode about the American fortifications—ordering improvements in the defenses, receiving reports about British movements, and inspiring his men. He never even dismounted to eat.

As the British maneuvered outside the city, nightly raids by the "dirty shirts" killed British sentries, took their equipment, and kept the whole army off balance. During an engagement by the Cypress Swamp on December 28 (11 days before the main battle), the Tennesseans waded though the muck and leapt from log to log like cats, driving off the British beefeaters. The "Hunters of Kentucky" song would later boast that "every man was half a horse, and half an alligator." In one encounter on the day of the main battle, a dirty shirt took aim at a wounded British officer who was walking back to his camp. "Halt Mr. Red Coat," yelled the American. "One more step and I'll drill a hole through your leather." The officer complied, sighing, "What a disgrace for a British officer to have to surrender to a chimney-sweep."

Although the British greatly outnumbered the Americans, January 8, 1815, turned into one of the worst days in British military history. Over 2,000 British soldiers were killed, captured, or wounded. Only seven Americans were killed and six wounded, although their total casualties from skirmishes on other days reached 333.

As news of the battle spread throughout the United States, the American inferiority complex with regard to the British began to lessen. The Americans had smashed the best that Britain could throw at them. Newspapers quoted Shakespeare's *Henry VI*: "Advance our waving colors to the wall, / Rescued is Orleans from the English wolves." Jackson's upset victory was as important for America's future as Joan of Arc's was for France.

Remini's compact book focuses almost exclusively on the battle and the preceding weeks. He summarizes in a few pages, but does not detail, the battle's larger significance in American life. I wish he had done more in this respect; even so, *The Battle of New Orleans* is a major step toward reviving the memory of January 8, 1815—one of the most glorious days in American history—when Americans of both sexes and many races, creeds, and colors united to fight for freedom and defeated the most powerful standing army of the greatest empire in the world.

David B. Kopel, an adjunct professor of law at the New York University School of Law, is the research director for the Independence Institute.

A Survivalist in Madison

by Jane Greer

The Society of Friends
by Kelly Cherry
Columbia: University of Missouri Press; 192 pp., $17.95

◆

Imagine, if you will, a residential street in Madison, Wisconsin, where every neighbor is a member of the university faculty. Is this a metaphor for Hell? A trip to the *Twilight Zone*? A sequel to Richard Russo's tenure-track satire, *Straight Man*, or Jane Smiley's *Moo*?

None of the above. *The Society of Friends* is a collection of related stories about decent, earnest, overeducated residents of the heartland. Their lives braid and separate in ordinary ways, and a less scrupulous writer would have gone for the cheap laugh and made fun of the characters' sad humanity. Instead, Kelly Cherry offers a smorgasbord of Midwestern kindness, clumsiness, and salvation. "That's what we need a God for," her main character, Nina Bryant, says: "to grant forgiveness where the rest of us can't quite manage it."

The neighbors of Joss Court, their children, parents, lovers, and ex-spouses, dead and alive, are *our* neighbors. They declare bankruptcy, deal with a grown child's homosexuality, grieve for real and imagined losses. They hold block parties, attend readings by visiting writers, rake their yards, and occasionally engage in government-subsidized "performance art," portraying "The Gaza Strip Tease," "The Martin Luther Kingston Trio," "Cybersuck, or Vampires with Laptops," and "The Three Faces of Evil: Hussein, Gorbachev, Bush." They bolt their doors at night against an undefined, suspected lurking danger.

Both the author and her character Nina Bryant are "Famous Writers" and English professors at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This is unfortunate: It

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might derail readers who actually care about such inessentials. Wise ones, however, won't let it get in their way because, whether the book is autobiographical or not, its great fun lies in Cherry's fond, unflinching eye and perfect verbal pitch.

This is Cherry's sixth full-length book of fiction, but the first for me, although I've long admired her poems. She's smart, daring, rueful, funny. Even better, like any good poet, she reconstructs the chaotic deconstructed universe with startling, dead-on metaphors. Her storytelling action is capable—she gets us from point A to point B—but she's at her very best when she hovers over some observation, laying the language on with a trowel. Take this wry, tender description of a man Nina loves:

> Like most academics, he was deracinated, a man for all locales. Pittsburgh, Charlottesville, Palo Alto had been some of the points on his trajectory, but weren't they all the same, intellectually homogenous no matter how ethnically diverse, one big reading list? He had the pampered academic's exuberant desire to see the world benefit from his thinking. He was generous and ignorant, a middle-aged man in a preserve for middle-aged males, a place where middle-aged males grazed on grants or snoozed the afternoon away in endowed chairs, a place where they had a kind of mental sex in institutes (Esalens for the mind, these "Institutes for Research") and grew fat on footnotes—perpetrated by friends in other preserves—and cited the few articles they'd written.

We all *know* that man; Kelly Cherry *likes* him.

There's humor and—perhaps even rarer these days—*good* humor throughout these stories. The book's comedic and philosophical zenith is the chapter immortalizing Nina's forever-unnamed "little dog," her "Cairn-bairn." Never did I dream that a dog expressing its anal sacs by "scooting" (precise veterinary term) across the carpet could make me howl in an airport—or that such a time-honored canine urge might make a grand metaphor. "There is an itch so private that most people will discuss it only with their doctor," Nina says. "Seems to me [writers are] all expressing our anal sacs, too." God help us, she's right.

It would be easy to create a bleak still-life with these characters, but Cherry doesn't. She is *involved* with them, kind to them, and they are kind to each other in their inept human way. These people thrive by their stubborn involvement with each other. They came together from all corners of the country and have formed a family, sharing parenting tips and divorces and beer from coolers.

Nina's dog once ate all of her earrings, and the vet told her to take him for a walk and "see what comes out." They all came out. She washed them, her father sterilized them, and although she could never bring herself to wear them again, she could also never throw them away: They were a reminder of her involvement in loving her "little dog," now aging, and her father, now dead. "I think, sometimes, about the survivalist," Nina says. "I think we survive, if we survive, not by taking to the hills and feeding on what's there, unprocessed, but by being processed. Something swallows us and we make a long, dark journey at the end—the end!—of which we are still here, shiny and scintillating, bright as treasure, diamonds in the roughage."

Jane Greer, a North Dakota state employee, edited and published Plains Poetry Journal *from 1981 to 1993.*

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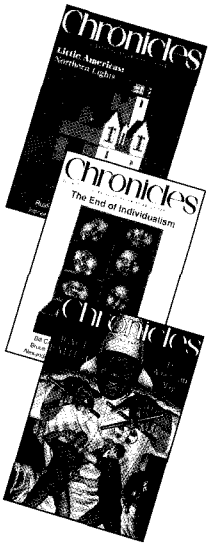

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by Samuel Francis

The Revolution Two-Step

The new century, not to speak of the new pseudomillennium, had not even begun last December when one of the scintillating debates typical of the intellectual life of our epoch suddenly erupted over the issue of who was the most important person of the old century. *Time* decided that it was undoubtedly Albert Einstein, neoconservative guru Charles Krauthammer insisted it was really Winston Churchill, while still other heavy-hitters suggested such eminences as Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Obviously, there was a pattern here.

The real Man of the Century, however, was almost totally ignored, if not actually scorned. Vladimir Lenin, founder and first chief executive officer of the totalitarian state, has a far better claim than any of the feel-good impostors and poster-boys of the New World Order mentioned above. It was Lenin who actually designed in theory and then carried out in practice the Total State, although admittedly he had no small amount of help from predecessors such as Robespierre, Cromwell, Calvin, and Savonarola and was soon surpassed in tyrannical achievement by Stalin and Mao. Within 30 years of his death, not only was the state Lenin created still in power, but it had been emulated, copied, and exported to more than half the globe. The collapse of his original version in the last decade did little to diminish Lenin's accomplishment since, much like another of his predecessors, John Brown, his soul keeps marching on.

Not the least of Lenin's accomplishments was to be remembered for various remarks he actually made as well as for several he didn't make. Indeed, the latter are often more piquant than the former. His best known non-remark is the famous quip that the capitalists "will sell us the rope with which we will hang them." He might have said it, and then again he might not have, though his writings are full of passages expressing much the same sentiment. Yet another is the phrase, "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back." In fact, this is exactly the reverse of the phrase Lenin used as the title of a lengthy essay he published in 1904 about the proper structure of an effective revolutionary party. The essay, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," contains what Bertram Wolfe called "the most naked expression of faith in hierarchy and distrust of democracy to be found in all of Lenin's writings." But whatever the virtues of the real product of Lenin's literary imagination, the distorted version of the title also has merit.

An old-fashioned man who played chess and listened to Beethoven, Lenin was also an apostle of the art and science of violent revolution. Forced for most of his youth to dodge the police spies, firing squads, exile, and prisons of his adversaries, he could hardly have anticipated that, in the not-too-distant future, revolution could be planned and actually carried out right under the noses of the ruling authorities, almost with their blessing and consent. Indeed, the whole strategy of the revolution today known as "political correctness" relies on the distorted title of Lenin's pamphlet, although the ultimate goal of the revolution remains exactly the same as Lenin's—the seizure of total power, in particular power over culture, the forms and structures of human thought and judgment.

The term "political correctness" is now more than ten years old, and no sooner had it come into vogue than it began to excite the kind of ridicule that it deserved. Tales of college classes where elementary facts of history, science, literature, and philosophy were deliberately butchered or silenced in order to suit the sexual, class, and racial obsessions of blatantly unqualified teachers became commonplace. Students and even faculty were disciplined and sometimes punished with expulsion or threats of violence for the slightest verbal deviation from the "codes" imposed at distinguished universities. For some years after its appearance, the battle against "political correctness" served as a major theme of almost all conservatives, paleo or neo, not a few of whom made their reputations as writers in exposing the p.c. farce.

Today, most of the more bizarre installments of political correctness seem to have vanished—at least, we seldom hear about them anymore in the context of college campuses. I recall listening to one prominent neoconservative a few years ago arguing that the whole phenomenon was bound to be temporary since it was merely a result of the radicals of the 60's getting tenure and imposing their nutty ideas on their universities. Once the radicals retired in the next ten or twenty years, he predicted, the political correctness cult would disappear.

As usual, the neoconservatives were wrong. What has actually happened is that p.c. took its degree and graduated into the larger society. Today, not only universities but corporations and even town and city councils maintain codes of speech and behavior often far more draconian than anything ever concocted at Berkeley or Madison. Which brings us back to Lenin, or at least to the distorted title of Lenin's pamphlet.

The common response of most conservatives and even of most sensible liberals to political correctness has been to treat it as a joke, a silly excess of ignoramuses and intolerant mediocrities unable to master the traditional curricula or abide by standards of conduct that prevail in real schools and universities. Unfortunately, that response largely misses the larger point about political correctness, which is that it represents an actual revolution. The sillier aspects of p.c., those that became notorious and excited ridicule, were the part of the revolution that might be called the "Two Steps Forward" phase. They didn't last and perhaps were not intended to last by those who invented them. Instead, having advanced two steps forward, they then quickly fell one step back to less offensive and bizarre but nonetheless revolutionary and totalitarian measures, measures that are perfectly consistent with the material interests of the transnational ruling class. That is how revolution under legal conditions operates—not by conspiracies hatched in dark cellars but through plans designed in graduate seminars, funded by mainstream foundations, and discussed openly in major newspapers. The regular dynamic of such revolutionary operations is that extreme, unpopular, and ridiculous measures are proposed and even enforced as sorties that probe the enemy's defenses. They are met by outrage and scorn and eventually re-

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pealed or, more likely, "modified," and everyone—including those who were the first to scorn and condemn the original measures—then calmly accepts the more moderate step back that permanently institutionalizes and locks in the revolution.

The experimental, university phase of the revolution lasted for about five or six years—the end of the 1980's and the first part of the 1990's—before the speech codes imposed by the first generation of revolutionaries began to be dismantled and replaced by more "moderate" ones. That brief reign, however, was enough to inculcate into the noggins of the next generation of the nation's ruling class the basic premises of the New Order—namely, that traditional identities (national, sexual, religious) or other such categories are forbidden to certain enemy groups but, at the same time, are obligatory for certain allied groups. Once this premise had been slammed hard enough through the neurons of the fratty baggers and geeks who went through college, there was little need for the rigorous codes that carried out the slamming. The graduates themselves could be relied upon to implement similar codes in the social institutions they entered after graduation.

That the revolution has now entrenched itself well outside the English departments and dormitories of academe ought to be clear enough. In 1999, the famous incident over the use of the word "niggardly" by a white Washington, D.C., city worker led to the worker's dismissal for using racially inflammatory and insulting language. Most of the national publicity about the incident revolved around the rather grotesque ignorance of the real meaning and etymology of the word on the part of the poltroons who objected and engineered the firing, but the comedy merely masked the more serious implications. In the end, the worker was eventually rehired, mainly perhaps because he turned out to be a homosexual and had the support of the District's immense homosexual network, and also because he expressed condign repentance for using a word that even sounded offensive to the blacks with whom he worked.

But suppose that a city worker had used a genuinely offensive word or phrase among his co-workers, a word traditionally regarded as obscene or vulgar, and that one or more of his co-workers had genuinely expressed offense at his language. The result would not have been the firing of the offending party; rather, he would have apologized to those offended, they would have accepted his apology, and all would have returned to normal. Suppose again that a worker had actually used a racial epithet to describe blacks or other allied groups (epithets about whites—"redneck," "white trash," etc.—are permissible, because whites are an enemy group); no apology would have worked, maybe even the support of the lavender lobby would not have helped.

The point is that it is not the act of offense that is being punished; it is the language used and the ideas invoked. To use a word that even seems to point toward forbidden subjects is not a breach of etiquette; it is an act of subversion. What was being subverted by the word "niggardly" was the power and status of an elite class that bases its power on the special status of a designated "master race."

Much the same is true of the more recent victim of the now nationally dominant political correctness cult, baseball player John Rocker. For the last couple of weeks of last year, Mr. Rocker was threatened with the ruin of his career for various utterly innocuous remarks he made in an interview about the oddballs one is likely to encounter while riding certain subway trains in New York City. He retained his career only because, in an unnerving imitation of Soviet brainwashing practices, he agreed to undergo psychiatric counseling for what he had said. What was never mentioned in the course of the Rocker crisis was that, in the same interview, he also made offensive remarks about women and used language that genuinely ought to bar him from decent society. Again, it is not the act of offense that is punishable but the exact language being used and the ideas being conveyed. Mr. Rocker, like the gentleman who said "niggardly," was implicitly discrediting the status of the regime's allies—kids with purple hair, unwed mothers, "queers with AIDS," ex-convicts, etc. His remarks were not in themselves offensive, but by swiping at the underclass allies of the ruling class, they were subversive.

The list could be extended easily, even on a planetary scale, with the international gang-up on Austria this year by the European Union, Israel, and the United States for even thinking about letting the democratically elected Jörg Haider enter a government coalition. The war against the Confederate flag and Confederate monuments, the Hispanic crusade against the "Anglo" and "Euro" identity of the American Southwest, the ever-lengthening list of traditional American icons that have to be rejected for their "racism"—George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Robert E. Lee, and even (according to an article in *Ebony* earlier this year) Abraham Lincoln—all are instances of the accelerating pace of the revolution. What is happening is that one set of icons, symbols, and (in the cant of the day) "role models" created and established by the old American culture is being replaced by another set of icons and symbols created and established by another culture that has found a new master race: The Virginian Confederate heroes of Richmond's Monument Avenue are displaced by a statue of black tennis star Arthur Ashe; a mural of Lee in Richmond is altered to suit black demands but is later firebombed and vandalized with the slogan, "Kill the white demons"; names of Confederate generals on the city's bridges are changed to names of local "civil rights" leaders.

The revolution will probably not finish as radically as it began. In accordance with the principle of "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back," it will probably retreat (at least temporarily) from its most offensive and aggressive demands and settle for only partial extirpation of the old symbolism, one that will allow the "conservatives" who defend the old culture to save face a bit and boast of how moderate they are and how they are willing to accept change. The moderation will also be more consistent with the interests of the ruling class. But the premises—that the old nation and culture are so evil that their symbolism must be altered or discarded and that the new dominant race and culture are so good that theirs must be saluted and worshiped as part of the new public orthodoxy, the new political formula that justifies the new ruling class—have already been conceded. It will be only a matter of time before the logical dynamic of the revolution is worked out fully. As Lenin is also supposed to have remarked, "Who says A must say B." c

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Letter From Venice

by Andrei Navrozov

The Last Doge's English

◆

I now want to add another likeness to my Gogolian gallery of Venice's living souls. If this continuing series should start to take on the blurry aspect of a spinning carousel, becoming a kind of soap opera of fleeting impressions, all I can say in my defense is that the development is an intended one, and that the clamorous success of Monet's water lilies, for instance, owes far more to the soap effect than does my own humble sketching. Impressionism is a perfectly good approach to the world, but it probably ought not to have fallen into the hands of the French who, like all regicides since Lady Macbeth, long to turn everything under the sun into a *savonnerie*.

And invariably I think of my friend Giovanni as someone who has managed to escape that perfumed world with his judgment intact, although French remains the language most native to him. Idiomatic as they are, neither his standard Italian nor his deeply Americanized English, which I would describe as heavy-hearted, is good enough to let him say what he really thinks. As for his Venetian—not a minor dialect among Italy's many, but a literary language with a rich tradition that includes the theater of Carlo Goldoni—it is altogether stillborn, which may be bewildering to the visitor from abroad who finds himself drinking wine and eating roast veal in the house of the man who governed Venice for much of the century, Giovanni's father, Count Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata.

But however serious or trivial the reason for the visitor's bewilderment, the natives themselves have many more such reasons, and are consequently far more bewildered, with the result that asking a Venetian about Giovanni Volpi is as dangerous as walking through a construction site without a helmet on. It is their aggregate reaction—some voluble hybrid of a Nevada filling-station attendant talking about Howard Hughes, a retired colonel in Hampshire talking about Bill Gates, and a Gdansk orchestra's concertmaster talking about Herbert von Karajan—that is the focal point of my impressions here.

The long and the short of it is that, to Venice, Giovanni is a mystery. Some of this tenebrous aura is obviously an inheritance from his father, who managed Italy's finances until the war: "Count Volpi is the voice of sincerity," said Mussolini. "He is not afraid of me. He is not afraid of anybody. It could be ventured that he is much more powerful than the head of the fascist regime." The quotation is from *Taccuini Mussoliniani* by Yvon De Begnac, a mammoth, decade-long continuous interview with the *Duce*, unpublished until the author's death in 1990 and still largely unknown despite the revelations it contains.

Apparently he was the only man in Italy whom the *Duce* addressed as *lei*. To understand what respect is attached by a dictator to this simple pronoun we may recall that Stalin reserved the polite *vy* for the scourge of Stalingrad, Marshal Zhukov. Mussolini himself, to say nothing of his economic field marshal whom he called "the last Doge," emerges from the book as a complex, independent, and wholly engaging figure, a brave thinker and a good talker:

> Count Volpi's recollections are not of men, but of a city. And for him, Venice is the universal city. If the world became one big Venice, the site of the foremost of human sentiments, he would deem himself a happy man. His melancholy hinges upon the knowledge that this dream can never be realized.

On the crisis of 1929, of which Mussolini says "Count Volpi was the only European financier to survive unscathed":

> "Waste!" Count Volpi uttered this word a number of times. "Waste, destruction of useful things, overproduction of useless things, people rushing into cities, urbanization, a diminishing desire to work, get-rich-quick mania, gambling away the future, intelligence subjugated to fortune, a middle class turned stupid, and workers resigned to their fate: there's your crisis!"

And on the gestation of Hitler's war, whose deep-hidden Soviet roots are only now beginning to be exposed to historical scrutiny with the publication of works like Stephen Koch's *Double Lives*, Ernst Topisch's *Stalin's War*, and Viktor Suvorov's *Icebreaker* trilogy:

> In the wake of the *Anschluss*, Count Volpi said to me: "Germany is heading towards Moscow, with the Kremlin's consent." Immediately after Munich, he said: "Berlin is moving towards Moscow, offering a morsel to Warsaw. Poland will chew of the morsel, but we all know who will gulp it down."

Such was Giovanni's intellectual inheritance, which he was free to accept as he chose. Yet, naturally, the world being what it is—even this ideal world, locked away in the filigreed lagoon like a portrait miniature in a gold locket, all but hidden from envious magpies and other scavengers of social progress—*le tout Venise* is far more keenly aware of his inheritance of bricks and mortar, including the beautifully preserved 16th-century Palazzo Martinengo-Volpi, up the canal from Corte Tron where I used to live and where we first met. Giovanni is rarely there, however, preferring to spend his time at Ca' Leone, the family house on the Giudecca that drowns in flowers every spring.

He is not married. People say that he is a recluse, that he loathes their city, that he is never here, that he prefers Paris, that he never goes to parties, that he shuns their company, that he is a snob, a misanthrope, an oddball . . . And the truth? The truth is that he is a virtuous man, a Venetian to the marrow of his bones, a man who has chosen to accept his intellectual inheritance in its entirety, mixed blessings and all—come hell or *acqua alta*—and, braving the incomprehension, and the uncomprehending scorn, of those who would see Venice merely as a restful alternative to Hollywood and Cannes, a quaint destination for the glamour crowd, has centered his life on solitary scholarship and the study of mod-

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ern history.

Yet who, even in the ideal world that is Venice, a place that in a most benign sense is something like a century behind the times, can possibly understand why a fabulously wealthy bachelor spends his days photocopying documents and poring over book catalogues, when it was his own old man who had started the Venice Film Festival and he could be spending his balmy carefree nights bragging to *décolleté* starlets in tapestried ballrooms by candlelight? As Arkady Belinkov once said, "I testify under oath that there are no circumstances in which the human soul is less immanent than the costliest kind of sausage." Rare indeed are those who would so testify alongside the Russian writer, especially if the casting for the role of the costliest sausage is done the Hollywood way. Certainly none would escape society's ridicule.

Hence, I sometimes think, Giovanni's heavy-hearted American accent when he speaks English, an accent I thought I had never heard, and would almost certainly never have thought of as admirable, until I met him. It is an instinctive way of putting distance between himself and what he sees as the social quagmire of an involuntarily modernizing Italy, something into which his own secretly beloved city must vanish one day. Because not only is the dream of the world becoming one big Venice, prosperous islands in a placid lagoon, not any closer to being realized than in his father's time, but on the contrary, it is more and more like the rest of the gross and turbulent modern world that the universal city is destined to become.

Now that I think of it, it occurs to me that I have heard that desperately American accent before, the first time from the mouth of a family friend in Moscow who had spent many years in Siberian concentration camps. Jack's parents, American Communist Party stalwarts in the 1930's, had lived all their lives in the United States thinking of themselves as Russian and eventually emigrated to the Soviet Union with their teenage son, whereupon all were promptly arrested. Jack used to tell how in his youth in Chicago he would say "Russian!" when asked about his nationality, and how, on the night of their arrest, the question was put to him again in Lefortovo prison. "And I barked back: 'Amer-r-ican!'"

The next time I heard it, in a somewhat more comical context, was in a bit of dialogue from Preston Sturges's *Palm Beach Story*, in which Rudy Vallee, playing the reclusive John D. Hackensacker, III, meets a disheveled Claudette Colbert in the sleeping compartment of a train. The next day, after he has bought her a diamond bracelet for each of her new dresses with "bracelet-length sleeves" ("Eet eez all the rahge!" exclaims the *vendeuse*), she demands to know why a millionaire should be found traveling by train in anything less grand than a stateroom. "Staterooms," replies Rudy Vallee, "are un-American."

As I said, it is not easy for Venetians to understand why *il Conte* does not spend more time in the Palazzo Volpi. If it were, perhaps he would.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

Letter From Wisconsin

by Sean Scallon

Standing for Pat

◆

"We don't have anyone else from the third congressional district. We need you to fill out our slate," said the voice on the other end of the phone, a dispatcher from Pat Buchanan's national headquarters.

I couldn't believe it. The third district of Wisconsin stretches over a sizable portion of the western part of the state, sprawling from the Illinois border northward along the Mississippi to the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. They could not find Buchanan supporters in Melrose, Independence, Mt. Hope, La Crosse, or Eau Claire? No desperate dairy farmers or blue-collar laborers barely hanging on against globalism's onslaughts?

Apparently, there was only me. Headquarters had gotten my name from a volunteer card I signed at a Twin Cities fundraiser last fall just as Pat had announced that he was leaving the Republican Party to join the Reform Party. I was willing to do some work in my spare time here in northwest Wisconsin, a.k.a. the Indianhead. I had neither the desire nor the cash on hand to drive to Milwaukee on such short notice.

But they obviously needed help, and I had offered my services, regardless of circumstance. A strong desire to do my part for the cause (along with the promise of reimbursement of travel costs: My father would be proud) made me decide to go. I remembered my mother's tales of volunteering for Robert Kennedy in Indiana; my own generation seems to have no ideals to fight for beyond our self-indulgences. I wanted stories to tell my children and grandchildren.

What I will tell them is hard to say. Was this the start of something big, or just more political factionalism of the kind that third parties often engage in?

The convention was part absurd and part old-fashioned frontier democracy. Brawls and fisticuffs were common throughout the early 19th century, sometimes over great issues of the day, other times over where to locate the town flagpole. Such behavior lasted through much of the 20th century, before television made raucous politics taboo.

After surviving an April storm that dumped eight inches of snow on Milwaukee, I arrived at the Radisson Hotel-Airport. I was disappointed. Surely the Wisconsin Reform Party convention should take place in a grand hotel, reminiscent of the great conventions of yesteryear!

I should have known things were fishy right from the start: The ten-dollar fee I paid at the registration table only allowed me to be a spectator. I was not a member of the Reform Party. That would cost another $15. Even if I had been a member, I would have had to wait six months to have any say on party leadership, rules, or candidates. The state chairwoman, a poor man's Ann-Margret, read a letter from Minnesota Gov. Jesse "The Body" Ventura, who left the party earlier this year because it had become "dysfunctional" (that is, out of his control). All the while, Muzak drifted down through the speakers, drowning out the voices of the state party leaders at the podium.

Although Buchanan campaign officials assured us they would take care of the voting rules, the realization was setting in that I had wasted my time. These rules, which had been enacted in a February meeting that nobody bothered to tell the Buchananites about, were intended to legislate against opportunism, which is about as effective as legislating against immorality. Thus the paradox of the Reform Party: It cannot grow without

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the Buchanan Brigades, but it will not be the same party with them in charge.

The Buchananites segregated themselves in the back of the room, foreshadowing the sundering of the state party. Right from the start, the voting rule was challenged. "Point of order!" cried one man, a tall mustachioed chap wearing a Reform baseball cap. He was challenging the legality of the meeting that had established the voting rule through an extensive working knowledge of *Robert's Rules of Order*, which a true Reform Party member, like a lay preacher with his Bible, should not be without.

The meeting's parliamentarian, an Ichabod Crane look-alike, promptly ruled him out of order. He claimed to be a professional parliamentarian, but since he was not from England, I figured he was one of the state leader's friends, a hotel employee, or someone from the airport. He did not prove impartial. "Point of order!" the Buchananites cried from the back. "I challenge the ruling of the chair!" To which he replied, "You're out of order!" He swatted down each motion.

The Buchananites realized that the fix was in, so they proceeded to organize their own meeting in the back. Pandemonium broke out, complete with yelling, catcalls, arguments, and threats to call the cops. Now there were two conventions of the Wisconsin Reform Party. (Thanks to the Radisson staff for providing the Brigades with our own podium.) Both proceeded to elect their own delegates, national committeemen, and state officers, while trying to talk over each other. Meanwhile, a hotel manager frantically ran around, trying to figure out what was going on. Since we had already paid our ten dollars to get in, he let us stay. Repeated attempts to turn off the Muzak were unsuccessful.

The event was reminiscent of the scene in Warren Beatty's movie *Reds* in which John Reed and his socialist compatriots are driven out of the party at their Chicago convention in 1919. Soon they are meeting in a boiler room, setting up the "Communist Labor Party of America" and splitting the communists until there is nothing left but splinters. This is one reason why the Founding Fathers distrusted political parties. While they claim to organize around ideals, for the most part, parties evolve around personalities. Human nature being what it is, disagreements then split the parties into more and more factions until the original point is lost. Our ancestors feared that a strong party could only be organized around a strong man and centralized according to his vision, which would threaten the idea of liberty itself. Looking at the Jacobins, the communists, the Nazis, and the fascists, it's hard to argue that they were wrong.

This is the struggle Buchanan ultimately faces. His political movement is animated by very strong ideals, but it is also personality-based. Because the Brigades are loyal to him personally, they would not have joined the Reform Party without him. They think he is the only candidate who addresses their views, and I agree. But many would have followed him to the Workers World Party or any other party he might have joined. If Buchanan loses this fall, does he stay, and do they stay, in the Reform Party? Do they work to make it stronger? Or do they walk away after what will perhaps be his last campaign?

This is what concerns and upsets longtime Reform members. Even some Reformers sympathetic to Buchanan's cause were put off by what they saw as a *putsch*. One state leader said, "I've been working with this party since it was founded eight years ago!" She sounded like a little kid whose tree-house club had been taken over by the kids down the block. The problem is that parties are not clubs—at least strong ones are not. But Wisconsin Reform has not been much of a party.

Up until this point, I was more or less a fly on the wall, worried about spending an evening in a Milwaukee jail cell for my political views. But since I was the only third-district delegate there, I was named to the Buchanan slate to the national convention in Long Beach, California. I am reluctant to go, but maybe I will, at least if headquarters cannot find an alternate to take my place. I would like to participate in a real national political convention.

Once upon a time, such events took place: scenes of great battles for presidential nominations and forums for heated and passionate discussions of the pressing issues of the day. Then they became sanitized for television's sake. Perhaps the Reform Party will hold an old-fashioned convention. Perhaps I will actually see people willing to put their fists and their faces on the line for what they believe. I'll be sure to pack a set of boxing gloves.

Sean Scallon is a journalist who lives in East Ellsworth, Wisconsin.

Letter From Kansas

by Harlan J. Edmonds

Disinherit the Wind

◆

As a displaced Southerner sojourning in Kansas, I'll never forget the time I wandered into the statehouse and encountered John Steuart Curry's mural. One section features John Brown, girded with sword and pistol, mouth and eyes agape, Mosaic beard jutting off at a right angle, brandishing a rifle in one hand and the Good Book in the other. Grossly exaggerated in size, he looms over stalwart Yankee saints to his right and sinister Confederate sinners to his left, with cowering Negroes behind and dead soldiers prostrate at his feet. Looking back, I'm not sure which is worse: that the thing was commissioned as late as the 1930's, or that it is still there. Even so, after a decade of living in this state, I'm starting to feel right at home. Most Kansans these days are friendly, practice good citizenship, and mind their own business—unlike Osawatomie Brown. In the face of such improvements, it seems ironic that Kansas is drawing global condemnation as a staging ground for antinomian terror.

I'm not talking about Timothy McVeigh. Judging from the sheer quantity of bad press, the biggest villain in the history of the state is the Kansas Board of Education (KBE). Nobody got hacked to death or blown up this time, but every media apparatchik from Topeka to Peking has raised the alarm, lest "the mental hijacking of an entire state's children by sectarian zealots"—as the *New Republic* shrilled—be allowed to stand. Once perceived far and wide as an innocuous and blandly progressive "Land of Oz," Kansas found its image transformed overnight into that of a politically incorrect relic right out of the Stone Age.

Contrary to popular reports, the KBE had something milder in mind in early 1999 when it embarked on a standardization of the science curriculum and testing standards for grades K through 12. A state-appointed, 27-member committee of "science experts" was sent to the KBE's aid; the committee cribbed material from sources such as the educational arm of the National Academy of Sciences and

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forwarded the fruit of its not-too-strenuous labor to the ten-member KBE for the rubber stamp. But the KBE (or "lay board," as the "experts" contemptuously dubbed it) held certain reservations about the wisdom of conforming Kansas to a nationalized educational standard of the "Goals 2000" variety. Furthermore, some members objected to the presentation of the theory of evolution as one of five "fundamental" concepts uniting all scientific disciplines.

As the vote approached last May, KBE member Steven Abrahms presented a slightly modified version of the standards that allowed for an exploration of the full range of theories about origins and biological change, including the involvement of an "intelligent designer." Five conservatives rallied around this revision and five liberals (or as the media would say, "moderates") opposed it. Thus began a long, hot summer of deadlock that culminated in a revealing public hearing. For two consecutive days, Kansans of every sort—from Mennonite farmers to pin-striped professionals—took turns at the microphone to voice their support for the conservative modification. A far smaller number—typically condescending academics—expressed their outrage that the ignorant masses should dare to question scientific orthodoxy, meddle with public education, or otherwise take seriously the prerogatives of citizenship. This was apparently enough to drive the mild-mannered vice chairman of the KBE, Harold Voth, to break ranks and work out a deal with conservative members Steven Abrahms and Scott Hill. The new standards passed by a vote of six to four on August 11.

The substance of this accommodation was apparently too subtle for most reporters to grasp—much less explain. The KBE recognized a logical distinction between "microevolution" (meaning observable, adaptive changes within a species) and "macroevolution" (meaning theoretical changes of greater scope). In the end, the board simply voted to leave the issue of macroevolution to the discretion of each of the state's 304 school districts. The KBE's chairman at the time, Linda Holloway, summed it up: "I think local people can make good decisions."

Based on previous coverage, I expected to find word of this result buried the following day on page 6B of the *Kansas City Star*, but instead it made the front page. Then the *New York Times* turned it into a lead story, and the call for a massive counteroffensive reverberated through the foreign press. The BBC aired an eight-minute feature. Back home, editorialists from coast to coast had fits. The talk-show comics started in. Television philosopher Hugh Downs wrote a personal rebuke. Roger Ebert emerged from his screening room to ball a chubby fist. Fashionable academics everywhere gave notice that people educated in Kansas were soon to become a backward tribe of stinkards unfit for college admission. A company out on the left coast sounded the call to divest and avoid doing business with Kansas altogether. Assorted cranks vowed never to drive through the state again. On August 23, *Time* devoted its cover and most of its ink to a "How We Became Human" issue featuring a tedious series of articles packed with pseudoscientific speculation about the loves and lifestyles of extinct apes. And, of course, the ACLU threatened to sue.

In short, almost anybody worth having for an enemy has taken potshots at Kansas over this, and that's made me proud to be here. For in the annals of the Long Rout that is the Culture War, this represents one of the few success stories for friends of the Old Republic. Given its inauspicious start as an asylum-like territory crawling with warmongering social gospelers, transcendentalist Red Republicans, and spirit-rapping Yankee schoolmarms, Kansas has had nowhere to go but rightward. Today, the state is rife with homeschoolers, pro-lifers, and tax-resisters. There's even a group of western counties that has hatched a secession movement. Not content with one of the more conservative congressional delegations in the nation, the social conservatives of the state Republican Party have more than once allowed a Democrat to win an election rather than compromise their principles with the liberal, country-club Republicans who still hold most of the money and power here.

Of course, those liberal Republicans are still sufficiently unctuous and New England-addled to side with the statists and trendy intellectuals on this issue, as on most everything else. Gov. Bill Graves called the KBE's decision "terrible, embarrassing." "Boy, Kansas is really the laughingstock of the world now," groused state Sen. Rich Becker. "There has been a serious breach of common sense," contributed state Rep. Ralph Tanner, before joining a delegation that ran to the governor with a scheme for appointing the KBE instead of electing it. Perhaps realizing that he and his cronies had been installed by those same moron yokels who had elected the school board, Governor Graves prudently curled into the political equivalent of the fetal position and left Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer to take the cake with a remonstration worthy of a New York neocon: "Literally, I cannot overstate how damaging this is to the state in terms of business."

Yes, well. On top of that impossible-to-overstate damage, the involvement of parents in the schooling of their own children, and the public challenging of scientistic authority on matters ontological, the rulers found themselves treated to the totally unexpected failure of their most powerful ideological weapon: the *Inherit the Wind* myth. Normally, when one of these hearings comes up, all the powers-that-be need do to shame the peasants into submission is frame the debate in the terms of that preposterously inaccurate Broadway play about the 1925 Scopes trial. And considering that its 1960 cinematic knockoff was shown to so many of them in public schools as a documentary, what other outcome could they imagine but a reprise of the scene where Frederic March, as William Jennings Bryan, apoplectically croaks of a fundamentalist fit right there on the courtroom floor? Never mind that it did not happen. The evangelists of evolution are not known for attempting to offer a systematic, empirical case for their claims when a lie, a smear, or a cheap shot will do the trick. But this time it did not. To the frustration of the elites, and the obvious chagrin of their amen-shouting accomplices in the media, the locals did not stick to the script. Instead of swearing the earth was flat and handling pizen snakes, these no-nonsense people of the plains only proved to be civil, articulate, and eager to grapple with the controversy at the local level.

By itself, this was not enough to send the elites into a panic. What really got them was the realization that their invincible trump card—a judicial smackdown of popular will based on a lunatic-left interpretation of the First Amendment—was not up to the job of gagging the dissenters. Because the KBE didn't vote to require schools to teach that God created matter, the earth, life, or mankind—and because it never voted to prohibit teaching that these things evolved through random, purposeless natural processes, either—the usual anti-Christian litigation groups have had to content themselves

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with mass-mailed threats to all 304 Kansas school districts reminding them what happens to foolish little educators who mention God. The net result, which could go on for years, is a Mexican standoff. While these nationally financed outfits can't do much about the return of discretionary authority to the local boards, they are making it loud and clear that they will do whatever it takes to prevent them from so much as dreaming about taking it seriously. And as Stephen Presser recently noted in *Chronicles* (November 1999), the threat of litigation is enough to cow all but the most defiant school boards into utter subjection.

Yet it could get interesting if even one of them is made of the same stuff as the slim state-board majority, who continue to stay loyal to their constituents in the face of everything that can be thrown at them. For instance, when copyright permission was spitefully revoked by the authors of the non-controversial portion of the new science standards last October, the KBE simply got a lawyer and rephrased it all, save the tiny portion they had already modified. As of this writing, a last-ditch demand for "external review" has just been staved off, the speaker of the Kansas House can't drum up much interest in abolishing the KBE before it strikes again, and the Missouri Repertory Theater's hissy-fit production of *Inherit the Wind* did not exactly pack in Jayhawkers or Bushwhackers.

This leaves the ruling elites with one final resort for securing total victory, one which will require the involvement of interested parties near and far, Democrat and Republican alike. But it is a tactic that seldom fails: a liberal application of cash. With half of the KBE's seats up for grabs this fall, and four of those five presently held by villainous conservatives, champions of secularization and macroevolution are stepping forward and swearing to overturn their work. And if one or more of the targets doesn't fall to a primary challenger from within his own party in August, then one or more is expected to fall in November. But not without a fight, insists incumbent Linda Holloway. It is going to get ugly before it's over, and if it doesn't become "bleeding Kansas" all over again, this is certain to become the costliest school-board race in state history, thanks to outside agitators and leftist slush funds in other parts of the country. That mode of politics, at least, does resemble the 1850's. Otherwise, the ironical inversions continue to mount, none more delightful than the possibility that this sort of polarization could spread to other states like a prairie fire. Regardless of the ultimate outcome, there's always a bright spot: Considering what old John Brown would probably do if he caught somebody teaching his kids evolution, the Jacobin Republicans in Topeka might finally decide to do something about that heinous mural of theirs.

Harlan J. Edmonds writes from Shawnee Mission, Kansas.

Letter From Asia

by Jeffrey Meyers

Dashing Through Asia

"Down to Gehenna and up to the throne,
He travels the fastest who travels alone."
—Rudyard Kipling

◆

Not as horrible as Calcutta or as ugly as Seoul, Bangkok, spreading along the flat flanks of the Chao Phraya river, is the whorehouse of Asia. Both girls and boys will do anything you like with a Coke bottle or Ping-Pong ball. The prostitution reflects the contrast between monks and catamites, luxury and squalor; between the graceful old temples and the hideous modern buildings. The overwhelming noise and pollution from the heavy traffic extend to the very edge of the sprawling city, and the lack of stoplights makes crossing the street a dicey and dangerous business.

On a three-hour walk from a luxurious riverside hotel to the National Museum, I passed scores of food shops—some with a single charcoal brazier, others cramped in a tiny alcove—as well as sections of town jammed with gem dealers, rice merchants, metal workers, and street traders operating on the most slender of margins. There were no solicitors or beggars (a great contrast to 20 years ago) and many spontaneous smiles. A slow boat, cruising from bank to bank, brought me back to the hotel and gave some sense of the atmosphere the city once possessed.

One Chinese restaurant had more staff than patrons: parking man, door boy, two cashiers (with abacus), headwaiter, three busboys, and eight giggling waitresses in pajamas. They translated the numbered dishes I had selected into Cantonese while the owner wrote them down. Half the food was what I had ordered (the noodles never came); half, what they thought I should have.

There is no traditional Asian model for a modern city of several million inhabitants. The new Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere in Singapore has imitated the West and produced a sterilized and mechanized metropolis, dedicated to the aggressive acquisition of money and material goods. The old, two-story Chinese buildings are being ruthlessly razed and replaced by a conglomeration of high-rise shopping malls which extends from Orchard Road to Clifford Pier. The little satay stalls at the harbor have been amalgamated into a giant unappetizing Food Centre.

The lowlife described in Paul Theroux's novel *Saint Jack* has been obliterated by the puritanical regime of Prime Minister Lee, and well-intentioned but repressive rules have been enacted against almost everything. (A beggar is unthinkable in prosperous Singapore, but I saw a few.) Nearly all interest has been drained out of this once colorful city, which is now about as interesting as downtown Denver. Yet it is still possible to see, in the constricted remains of Chinatown, elaborate preparations for the Year of the Rabbit; from pressed fan-dried ducks to firecrackers, from calligraphed good-luck greetings to pickled snakes.

Though there is nothing of extraordinary interest to see in Malacca—halfway between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur—this once busy and now sleepy Conradian town still has great character and charm.

Malacca has Sikh and Chinese temples, Malay mosques and cemeteries. The shops in the narrow streets of Jalan Gelegang sell batik, cheroots, caged birds, Malacca canes, and fine antiques—especially pottery influenced by Dutch designs and made for Straits Chinese. Decrepit sampans and junks sail along the waterfront. The shopkeepers are unassertive and curious about where the rare visitor came from. No Malays, with kris unsheathed, ran amok.

Borneo still has red-pelted orangutans, Land and Sea Dyaks, wild men, and headhunters. In Sarawak, in the northeast part of the island, now divided by Malaysia and Indonesia, Rajah Brooke and his English dynasty ruled for more than 100 years. Just north, in Kota Kina-

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balu (formerly Jesselton), destroyed by the Japanese and rebuilt after the war, the dense jungle presses through the hills and comes right down to the sea. The distant volcanic mountain, which gives the town its name, can be seen from the port. The fish and vegetable markets, facing the offshore islands, were exceptionally large and clean. Unlicensed peddlers were gently moved on by the police. The markets offered a great range of exotic fruits, fierce little sharks, and 100-year-old eggs—long buried and surrounded by a hard black crust. Video games have not yet reached Borneo, and the boys still play the pinball machines.

In a surprisingly elegant antique shop, all sizes and styles of Chinese pottery ("maybe Ming, very old") fell into two crude categories: with cracks $170, without cracks $340. When the owner immediately agreed to a reduction of 50 percent, I fled the shop in haste and confusion. I was refused admission to Friday prayers in the gaudy new state mosque that dominates the southern side of the hot (90 degrees) and humid (95 percent) town. But I saw the beautifully displayed cultural artifacts in the Sabah Museum, and had a superb lunch of satay and noodle soup in the museum restaurant. The toilet seats had been torn off in the lavatories and a sign depicting a man squatting with his feet on the rim of the bowl read: "Don't use this position. Keep feet on floor." The museum disclaimed any responsibility for injuries to squatters who fall off or into the toilet.

The day I arrived in Manila, 12 people were killed as 10,000 farmers demonstrated in front of Malacañang Palace. My well-informed source there believes Corazon Aquino is idealistic and incorruptible, enjoys great popular support, and will survive the opposition of the relatively small number of communists and of Muslims in the south. The economy, which had been sloping downward, has now leveled off.

The first impression of the city—the antithesis of Singapore—is overwhelmingly depressing. It is ugly, crowded, noisy, dirty, smelly, polluted, poor, and packed with beggars. The minimum wage (often not paid) is three dollars per day; the average income is $700 per year. There is not one attractive street or building in downtown Manila, which has become a huge brothel for Japanese businessmen. Child prostitution is quite common.

Tourist interest is very slight. Intramuros, the run-down quarter built by the Spanish, contains, within the old city walls, the Church of San Agustín, the Cathedral, and Fort Santiago, where the Japanese kept prisoners in barbaric conditions during their occupation of the country. Philippine Village, near the airport, has houses and handicrafts from different regions, but the atmosphere is dreary and depressing. The signs in the city are in English, and most people have some knowledge of that language. One boy approached me and politely remarked: "Good day, sir. Please enjoy yourself. Have a good time in our fair city. And give me one dollar!"

I spent one afternoon at the handsome grounds and clubhouse of the Manila Polo Club, whose elegant members survived the Marcos regime, send their children to American universities, and seem to control half the wealth of the country. During the chukkers, under a heavy gray sky, the girls squealed with excitement. As I left the city, thousands of demonstrators were marching on the Presidential Palace.

In modern China, one sees the sad remnants of a great culture that has degenerated and been destroyed. I arrived in Canton on the first day of the lunar New Year, which lent a faintly festive air to an essentially drab and dusty, though friendly and orderly, city of seven million. Firecrackers exploded and vast crowds of people (who recalled Asian hordes swarming into battle) packed the streets and parks. Many of the hundreds of small private shops were open on the most important holiday of the year. Young couples obsessively snapped photos of the one pampered and adored child they are legally allowed to have.

Soldiers and police were inconspicuous; Mao suits, propaganda banners, and portraits of political leaders were scarce. Almost everyone now studies English, and almost no one speaks it. A rare sign in Roman letters read: "General Headquarters for Lamps Busines." Canton's proximity to Hong Kong and the coast makes it more "Western" than other Chinese cities. Only yokels stare at foreigners. In the squat dwellings and side alleys off the main streets, families are crammed in with shops and stalls, laundry hangs in the foul air, caged birds chirp, and music blasts.

My guide looked as though he had been sent from central casting to play a sadistic torturer. Tipping in China is officially forbidden and gratefully received. The Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, the Classical Learning Academy, the public parks, and the vast zoo (with seedy-looking pandas) were all hideously ugly. I saw no building constructed before 1880. Several enormous hotels, built with foreign capital, have recently opened and the best double rooms cost $80 per night. The ten-dollar lunch at the Northern Garden restaurant, served by automaton waitresses, was elaborate and excellent. The atmosphere of Canton is a cross between *Mädchen in Uniform* and *1984*.

Hong Kong—with Kandy, Bali, and Penang—is the most lively, interesting, and attractive place in Asia. The temperate climate is a pleasant change from the sweltering towns of the south. It has a scenic harbor equal to those of San Francisco, Sydney, and Rio, as well as English order and efficient transportation. The cable-car ride to Victoria Peak is charming, and the view is spectacular. The Hong Kong/Kowloon ferry (ten cents for the upper deck) is the best buy in the Orient. There is a fine beach at Repulse Bay and luxurious shopping in vertiginous malls with looping Piranesi staircases. There is exotic filth and congestion on the sampans at Aberdeen and on the narrow ladder streets that snake into the hills. One especially abject beggar humiliated himself by thumping his head on the ground and clanging his tin cup, but he was ignored by the crowd that swirled around him.

Canton is only three hours away by train. Macao, 45 minutes by hydrofoil, has crumbling Portuguese buildings and superb Portuguese food. The Chinese are noisy and messy feeders. But if you avoid fish lips, pig snout, bear paws, and monkey brains, you can eat very well in Hong Kong. All the dishes are served at once, with the soup last. When I asked for a glass of water, I was told there was none; then I was brought hot water, bottled water, and finally, as I persisted, a glass of cold water.

On the second day of the New Year holiday I took an hour's boat ride to the island of Cheng Chau. There were hundreds of live-in fishing boats in the harbor, decorated with flags and lights, and dozens of restaurants on the sea front. It seemed like a run-down resort at the wrong end of the Mediterranean. When I objected to an inflated bill for drinks, the proprietor immediately halved it to the correct amount. It is bad luck to quarrel at the beginning of the year. A gaudy Taoist temple was devoted to wor-

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shiping the god who protected fishermen, and smoke from incense sticks wafted messages to heaven. After nightfall, the skyscrapers along Hong Kong harbor were brilliantly illuminated by the annual fireworks display controlled by computers.

Communist China "guaranteed" that the government and economy of Hong Kong would remain the same after they took control of the colony. But most of the Hong Kong money was safely deposited in foreign banks. It is certainly in China's interest to reap the benefits of economic prosperity, but how could Hong Kong remain capitalistic and democratic when the rest of the country is totalitarian? Tibet has certainly not retained its freedom, culture, and religion under Chinese rule. And dictatorships have not always followed self-interest. Both Stalin and Hitler destroyed their political, military, and professional elite in the 1930's. Singapore, and even Shanghai, are eagerly waiting to replace Hong Kong as the commercial and tourist capital of Asia. When the crisis comes in the next decade, the people of Hong Kong—like the citizens of a country under siege—may remove their portable assets and flee before the hostile invaders.

Jeffrey Meyers will publish, this fall, a life of George Orwell (Norton), Privileged Moments: Encounters with Writers *(Wisconsin), and* Hemingway: Life into Art *(Cooper Square).*

Letter From Belgrade

by Miodrag Zarkovic

Whodunit?

◆

Taxi drivers in Belgrade, like their counterparts everywhere, know almost everything about almost everything. However, they do not know who murdered the controversial commander of the Serbian Volunteer Guard (SDG), Seljko Raznatovic Arkan; Yugoslav defense minister Pavle Bulatovic; and several other public persons and big gangsters this past spring, but they know exactly who did not.

They are convinced that the organizers (or organizer) were not foreigners: not the CIA, MI5, the U.S. State Department, Albanian terrorists, the Pentagon, NATO, or any Western intelligence or military service.

"Rubbish," says Milorad D—, a cab driver in his early 50's, whose face shows he did not have an easy life. He does not buy the "evidence" publicized in the Serbian media that the order to kill Arkan came from abroad. The western powers couldn't capture him when he was on his honeymoon in Brazil three years ago. They couldn't even scratch his empire. He played with them for years; he made a mockery of their efforts to arrest him. Even their bombs couldn't destroy him. How could they suddenly find a way to kill him? No, it was someone from here, someone much closer to Arkan.

Every taxi driver shares Milorad's opinion about Belgrade's most popular subject. It is very easy to conduct a thorough survey of taxi drivers, since public transportation in the Serbian capital has not functioned properly for a very long time. (Blame it on oil sanctions.)

Most Belgraders are convinced that the killers' nationality is the same as the victims'. Young "wise guys" who still idolize Arkan, old ladies who were obsessed with his marriage to top folk star Svetlana Ceca Velickovic, fans of his soccer club "Obilic" and fans of rival clubs Zvezda and Partizan, businessmen who were amazed at his fortune and power, police and army officers who served minister Bulatovic . . . all agree with the drivers.

"Maybe they killed Escobar, but Arkan wasn't such an easy target," jokes Dejan S—, a 28-year-old computer engineer from Belgrade.

It seems nothing can change public opinion. Italian businessman Giovanni De Steffano (a close friend of Arkan's who is currently serving a sentence in an Italian jail) claimed in a letter to the Belgrade media that the British government organized Arkan's murder because it wanted to destabilize Yugoslavia and President Slobodan Milosevic. Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Vojislav Seselj, in a recent press conference, accused NATO countries of killing Minister Bulatovic. But these statements are not enough to make Serbs reconsider.

Arkan was murdered in Belgrade's elite hotel, in the early evening of January 15, in front of many eyewitnesses, from close range, with deadly precision, in a way that leaves no doubt that the crime was organized, paid for, and managed by very experienced professionals. Belgrade police arrested at least three killers and two other men suspected to be accomplices, but there is no clue as to who ordered and organized everything.

Minister Bulatovic was killed three weeks later, in a restaurant, also in the early evening, from a distance, probably from a Kalashnikov automatic rifle, in a way that also leaves no doubt that it was done by professionals. In the Bulatovic case, no one has been arrested.

The first victim was believed to be the most powerful man in Serbia's underground; certainly he was one of the most powerful men in Serbia. (He had his own private army.) The second victim was the state's defense minister. Both had to be familiar with any danger to them from inside the country. Could they really be so careless as to let somebody plan and organize their murders? It is possible that the assassins escaped their attention, but maybe the assassins did not have to escape their attention—not if they came from outside.

Western intelligence and military services had an interest in killing Arkan and Bulatovic. Serbs know that. But they do not want to believe that some American or British or Albanian bigshot was able to eliminate Arkan and Bulatovic. They prefer to believe that their compatriots are responsible for that: perhaps President Milosevic, an opposing mafia clan, or even the opposition parties.

The reason is simple. Serbs know that the answer to the question, "Who killed Arkan and Bulatovic?" is also the answer to the most important question in the Balkans: "Who is in charge of Serbia?" And Serbs, like any other people, do not like it when someone else is in charge.

Western diplomats did not hurry to blame President Milosevic for killing Arkan and Bulatovic, as they have blamed him for almost every other crime that happened in the Balkans in the 1990's. Instead, Robin Cook and Madeleine Albright made announcements in which they did not mention Milosevic's involvement at all. (Both said something like "Arkan got what he deserved.") Why do they want the world to think Milosevic is guilty of mass killings all over the former Yugoslavia, but not responsible for crimes that happened a few miles from his residence?

Miodrag Zarkovic is a journalist who writes from Belgrade.

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by Srdja Trifkovic

Gore's Foreign Policy: More of the Same, Only Worse

We have always known that a Gore presidency would continue the flawed foreign policy of the Clinton administration; but now we know that—unlikely as it may sound—things may be even worse if the Vice President wins in November. On the last day of April, Al Gore gave his first major foreign policy speech of the campaign. Speaking to journalists in Boston, he outlined his global vision and also warned against the "risky" policies of his Republican rival, Texas Gov. George W. Bush.

In the key part of his address, Gore singled out the economic prosperity of foreign nations as a vital security interest of the United States. "I believe that now we have a profound responsibility to open the gates of opportunity for all the world's people," he said. "Let me be clear: Promoting prosperity throughout the world is a crucial form of forward engagement."

Old habits of mind die hard, and the distorted trinitarian reflex lingers among Christophobes, too. That's why secular ideologues and social engineers like to work under tripartite slogans—"*liberté, egalité, fraternité*," "*ein Reich, ein Volk, ein Führer*." Perhaps for that reason, to the globalist-interventionists' mantra of "democracy" and "human rights," Mr. Gore has now added the third part of the slogan: "prosperity."

If promoting prosperity in, say, Outer Mongolia or Moldova is deemed to be a vital interest of the United States, then any item of economic policy by their governments that Gore's globalist-interventionists deem detrimental to that prosperity will provide an instant *casus belli*. Accordingly, in Gore's world, America's "vital interests" will keep multiplying at a breathtaking rate. The new challenges will include the existence of customs barriers and protective tariffs in faraway countries—those relics of sovereign nationhood detrimental to "free trade." Many more doors to free trade will have to be kicked open under Gore. The craters from ordnance manufactured by McDonnell will become the foundations for new McDonalds. Any reluctance of foreigners to "privatize" their key economic assets (say by selling them to *Wall Street Journal* subscribers) will warrant airstrikes.

And so, in addition to Clinton's wars for other peoples' "human rights," America will have Gore's wars for other peoples' prosperity. Interventions not connected to any clear and imminent threat to U.S. security will continue; indeed, they are part of Gore's strategy. "Our national security interests can be defined by our values," he said. From that premise, he even attacked Bush for his lukewarm support of last year's bombing of Serbia.

One could argue that Bush should have attacked Gore on the administration's record on the Balkans. This was an issue that could have given Bush some mileage with the millions of Americans who feel uneasy about last year's bombing of Serbia. But since Bush has chosen to pay lip service to the mainstream orthodoxy, Gore can now accuse Bush of being indecisive and "dangerously fixated on the Cold War past" in his views on the use of force:

> [Bush] suggests that he would not intervene to relieve even the brutal repression of ethnic cleansing and genocide. No wonder it took him six weeks to say anything about our action against the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Is that the right message for America to send to people around the globe struggling for freedom?

In view of his explicit support for further expansion of NATO, it is interesting that Gore attacked Bush for wrongly viewing Russia and China as U.S. enemies. "While we must remain vigilant against any deterioration in our relationships, the reality of the Global Age is that Russia and China are indeed competitors, but also vital partners in our efforts to tackle problems menacing to us all," Gore said.

In fact, it is the Clinton-Gore White House that turned Russia into an enemy. Gore is apparently unable to grasp the fact that it is impossible to maintain friendship with Russia and at the same time to advocate further NATO enlargement and to bask in the glory of NATO's victory over the Serbs. Predictably, however, the Beltway establishment welcomed his speech. The *Washington Post* editorial on May 2 expressed pleasure that:

> Mr. Gore embraced engagement of China and Russia, claimed victory for the Clinton-Gore intervention in Kosovo and promised that he, like Mr. Clinton, would seek an agreement with Moscow to permit development of a limited U.S. missile-defense system against North Korea without sacrificing the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

This is an impossible proposition, but Gore is as oblivious of its incoherence as the *Post*'s editorialist. The administration threatens to abrogate the ABM treaty unless the Russians agree to amend it as desired by Washington. But it is naive, or else deliberately provocative, to expect Vladimir Putin to perform an act of submission that is contrary to his country's interests and that would make him look weak in the crucial early days of his presidency. If the United States goes ahead with its national missile defense system, abandoning the 1972 treaty, then all bets with Russia may be off. Clinton and Gore claim they can have it both ways. They are wrong. NMD is a bad idea based on unsound science and flawed strategic doctrine.

What we need to make American cities more secure is not a misnamed anti-ballistic shield that may or may not work, but a foreign policy that will not prompt the assorted "rogues" around the world to consider attacking America in the first place. Al Gore is not the man for the job. Temperamentally and intellectually, he is a Clintonite, but—to make things worse—he believes his own propaganda, unlike his present boss. Gore's "doctrine," as outlined on April 30, will entangle America in more wars, more interventions, and more lies, all unconnected to this country's interests, at odds with its tradition, and contrary to the wishes of the vast majority of its people. c

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RELIGION

A Christian Critique of American Foreign Policy

by Jean-Marc Berthoud

My last (and only other) visit to the United States was early in 1986. I was visiting the Capitol at the invitation of a friend who, at the time, was working for a Republican member of the Senate. It was on the day of President Reagan's State of the Union Address. In the silence and solitude of this huge building, I experienced a feeling of awe which I shall never forget. When in Versailles or in Paris, among the palaces of Genoa or walking down Whitehall toward Parliament, one has a vivid sensation of the power which went forth from these great buildings. But what one senses are the vestiges of power, not its reality. In those silent spaces of the Capitol, I was overwhelmed by the presence of a very real power. And I said to myself: "I stand here in the seat of the mightiest power this earth has seen. Woe betide the nations of the world when such a power falls into evil hands."

That same week, I had arranged a meeting with a personal advisor to the President on European and Soviet affairs. I wanted to share with him—and, through him, with the President—my dismay at the extraordinary cordiality Ronald Reagan had displayed toward President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union during their meeting in Geneva early in December of the previous year. Such warmth contrasted with Reagan's recent public denunciation of the "Evil Empire." I thought that such effusions could only weaken the Western perception of the great danger that the Soviet Empire represented. When supping with the devil, goes the English proverb, use a long spoon.

On that cold morning in February 1986, I shared such thoughts with the advisor. He listened in silence, then strode across his office and took a document out of a cabinet. "Look at this," he said. "I gave exactly the same advice to the President before he went to Europe. He paid not the slightest attention to my recommendations."

These anecdotes illustrate the great distance which lay between Reagan's rhetoric and the underlying political reality of cordial fraternization. What really mattered, of course, was the *realpolitik*, not the rhetoric. The events of the next few years were to show that the international political scene had already radically changed.

When Reagan was verbally attacking the Soviet Union, the Cold War had virtually ended. East and West, communism and capitalism had struck a secret bargain. Since the early 60's, Leninist and Stalinist confrontation with the capitalist block had been replaced by the Gramscian revolutionary strategy of penetration, infiltration, seduction, and domination so well described and prophetically analyzed in the 60's and 70's by Anatoli Golitsyn.

From the balance of two hostile blocks, the leaders of the world were moving in the direction of a joint directorate of world affairs, which would unify the planet under a single atheistic, socialist, and pantheistic government. From the communist perspective, this reorientation took on the names of Eurocommunism (in Italy); the Prague Spring (in Czechoslovakia); communism with a human face (all over); and finally, the *coup de grâce*, *perestroika* and *glasnost*.

In the West, the major turning point was 1968, when all the vital institutions of Western society—the media, the universities, the major churches, the judiciary, the educational organizations, etc.—were penetrated by Gramscian methods of cultural revolution. The results have been spectacular. It is instructive to draw up a short list of this New Class, this universal *nomenclatura*: Prodi, Solanas, Jospin, Blair, Schroeder, Mandela, Mbeki, and last, but not least, President William Jefferson Clinton. The convergence of East and West was symbolized by that extraordinary display of Russian communist flags over Washington at the end of the Reagan era. The new form of international communism had taken over the levers of command. Ecologists and pacifists (the German Greens, for example) could now, without a qualm, rain death and destruction on the Balkans because they held the reins of power. For their purpose, in the end, was not ecological stability or the promotion of peace, but a new revolutionary agenda. And the maintenance (and exercise) of the most brutal power was no obstacle in advancing such aims.

Communism, unlike fascism or Nazism, is not a national phenomenon, but a long-term international enterprise. After communism totally exhausted the human resources of Russia, the revolution nimbly transferred to a relatively healthy organism: the United States of America. Washington replaced Moscow as the center of world revolution. This, it would seem to me, is one of the basic lessons we can draw from the Clinton era.

What else explains why such men as Augusto Pinochet and Helmut Kohl have become the objects of judicial persecution? Why not attack left-wing figures who, by their utopian ideology, are far more liable to become political killers or candidates for corruption? The answer is simple. The socialist axe now being wielded by the governments of the West has fallen into the hands of our new-style revolutionaries. And such men are determined to exact revenge on men who, in various ways, destroyed the communist revolution. One of the reasons Yugoslavia has been subjected to such astonishing disinformation, calumny, and brutality in recent years is the simple fact that this nation had (under Tito) committed an unforgivable crime: It had escaped the domination of the Comintern.

To accuse a person or a nation of being "communist" or "Marxist" bears little opprobrium. If one wants to demonize a nation or a political adversary, the current gambit is to identify him with Hitler, with genocide, or with diverse crimes against the human race. This has obviously been the case with Jörg Haider, the leader of the Austrian Patriotic Freedom Party, whose political program includes a vibrant opposition to the anti-patriotic bureaucratic socialism of the European Union. No one would have batted an eyelid if he had been called a communist

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or been compared to Stalin, Mao, or Pol Pot, even though the viciousness of these totalitarian leaders far outstripped, at least in numbers, the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis.

One of the reasons for this strange partiality is the international character of communism. Both the defunct Comintern and the Gramscian New World Order are explicitly "internationalist" movements aimed at the disintegration of independent nations. Nazism, on the other hand, was a peculiarly nationalist movement exalting, to the point of idolatry, one nation at the expense of every other. But for the one-world socialist and pantheistic order, individual nations, or groups of nations, are an obstacle to its grand design, and they must either be absorbed into the greater whole or, if they resist such assimilation, face utter destruction. Thus, the independence of individual nations who seek to defend their national sovereignty must be broken and, if they resist, their autonomy must be destroyed by force.

The internationalist conglomerate, now visibly headed by the United States, waged a Thirty Years War against the independent Republic of South Africa. This war of attrition saw the final defeat of the beleaguered Boer Republic through the betrayal of the country's own government. South Africa thus became a willing victim to the seductions of the New World Order. But no one today seems bothered by the fact that violence in that country has increased to unprecedented levels and that the present condition of the black majority population is (in spite of a very real social liberation) much worse off than it was but a few years ago under white tyranny.

The Gulf War waged by the first American president openly to proclaim the virtues of the New World Order—George Bush, Sr.—let the Muslim nations know what would happen to them if they succumbed to the temptation of resisting the apparently irresistible might of the new *Pax Americana*.

The government of my own country, Switzerland, long known for its love of freedom and of an independence strongly buttressed by a foreign policy of armed neutrality and active diplomacy, was in three short years brought to heel by a media-driven war waged by an unholy alliance made up of the American government and certain rapacious (and thoroughly mendacious) international Jewish organizations, the latter totally contemptuous of the moral standards of the Torah. This international hijacking of the Swiss banks was conducted under the pretext of certain (in part genuine) injustices suffered by survivors of the holocaust and their descendants. The indecent abuse of the great sufferings of their own people by certain Jewish publicists in order to attack Switzerland provoked the indignation of the Swiss Jewish community and vehement protests from a number of Israeli journalists, who could not understand how their fellow Jews could turn the sufferings of their ancestors into a money-making racket. Our total capitulation to this American-led international cabal was only prevented by our system of direct democracy, under which all major issues are decided by popular referendum. The leader of the patriotic resistance is a successful businessman of strongly antisocialist convictions from the Grisons, Christophe Blocher, who—for his love of the independence of his country—has been publicly identified with Adolf Hitler by members of our Federal Council who are short on rational arguments. The intellectual, business, and political *nomenclatura* of my country has largely been won over to the ideology of our America-led international socialist ruling elite (Internazis, for short).

Even a cursory glance at the foreign policy of the present government of the United States reveals its intrinsically anti-Christian character. This is evident at least as far back as 1945 and comes out very clearly from the actions undertaken in the past ten years by the United States in the Balkans. In this cultural and international disaster, the United States has sided with the forces of Islam against all other parties in the conflict (with the exception of the Croats) who in any way reflected the slightest Christian heritage. Since NATO's occupation of Kosovo, which contains the greatest concentration of Christian churches and monasteries in the world, more Christian monuments have been destroyed than during the many centuries of Ottoman occupation of the Balkans.

United States policy in this region follows a two-pronged geopolitical strategy, the crucial element of which is the use of Islam as a battering ram. One prong aims at the soft Muslim underbelly of Russia—its interminable southern frontier—while the other counts on the abundant Islamic migrant population in most of the nations of Western Europe as a potential fifth column. The center pin of this strategy is the establishment of a strong Islamic political base in the Balkans—Bosnia and Greater Albania—under strict U.S./NATO patronage. The tragedy is that most of the governments of Western Europe have gone over to the enemy, becoming willing allies—or satellites—of the United States. One of the rare statesmen to have understood the U.S. threat to the independent existence of the European nations was the late François Mittérrand who, in his *Political Testament*, explicitly stated that the U.S. government was effectively, if not openly, at war with France.

In attempting to account for the persistently anti-Christian slant in American foreign policy, Robert A. Pois's path-breaking book *National Socialism and the Religion of Nature* is of great use. According to Pois, the Nazi religion of nature rejected all distinctions, e.g., between man and animals, good and evil, God and man, truth and lies. It also rejected traditional morality and elevated the emotional and instinctual at the expense of the rational. This neo-pagan religious ideology can be compared to certain aspects of the hyper-emotional and illuminist, irrational and antinomian religion so prevalent in important segments of American Christianity, especially in its charismatic expression. One is struck by a number of fundamental similarities: an accent on a monistic unity; a refusal of the controlling use of reason; a defense of emotion and instinct at the expense of intelligence and wisdom; an antinomianism and a passionate justification of the authentic as source of the true and the good; a continual confusion of God and man, of the spiritual with the material; an ignorance of the true nature of sin and of evil in the world.

This religious state of affairs in part explains the absence of real resistance among American churches to the totally amoral—but no doubt *authentic*—public and private actions of your current president. It also explains the contempt for law, for established rules of conduct, for solemnly signed and ratified international treaties, for any kind of decency, for truth itself, so rampant in the behavior of the current administration. Woe to the nations of the world that have to submit to such a nation!

It is the amorality—standing as they do beyond good and evil—of such public figures as Ted Turner and William Jefferson Clinton which explains the brutal,

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immoral, and viciously self-serving character of much of American foreign policy today. This attitude gives the policies of this great, but disfigured, nation their anti-Christian character.

An important difference between today's Western atrocities and those of the communists and the Nazis is to be found in the hypocrisy in which Allied brutality clothes itself. Arnaud-Aaron Upinsky, in his masterly study of the nature of modern politics, *La Tête coupée*, points out that the model for the modern politician is not Machiavelli or Robespierre, nor even Lenin, but Tartufe. For, like Molière's professional hypocrite, the modern politician conceals his brutal, amoral, and totally self-serving conduct of public affairs under a mask: not Tartufe's mask of Christian purity and piety, but the mask of humanitarian concern. The politics of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* have become universal.

These considerations lead us to reexamine the phenomenon of modern totalitarianism, which belongs to the very warp and woof of modern civilization, at least since the Enlightenment. For the refusal of divine transcendence, central to the Enlightenment, leads either to the domination of the One, unity and totality being concentrated in the state; or to the absolutization of the Many, which is the pluralism of social anarchy. The French Revolution, communism, and Nazism were in fact but the tip of the iceberg, its mass being constituted by the inexorable movement of a godless civilization toward a monolithic social order. Such a perspective leads us to revise our understanding of the Weimar Republic and of Nazi Germany itself. Far from being aberrant exceptions, these cancerous growths represented the norm. They were only ahead of their time, too modern at that time to be easily assimilated by the rest of the West, which was still too attached to the transcendent norms of Christian civilization to be seduced.

In fact, the totalitarian modernity of Nazi Germany foretold what Alexander Zinoviev calls the "totalitarian West." In both, we find the cult of science and technology; an obsession with biological and social evolution; an obsession with the occult and with death (e.g., abortion and euthanasia); pantheistic ecological naturalism; the extraordinary development of propaganda, disinformation, and the total infatuation of the public with lies; the almost total secularization (i.e., atheization) of the Christian faith; the fascination with power and violence; the cult of youth; and the cult of homosexuality.

Most of these elements are found within Western civilization today. Not only do we see throughout the West a cult of "life," that self-justifying vitalism which was so precious to the Nazis, with its exaltation of nature at the expense of man, but also a generalized immanence excluding divine transcendence from all political, social, and cultural realities. This rejection of God, this universal, practical, and democratic atheism, leads to the loss of intellectual clarity, with dramatic consequences: the incapacity to distinguish between femininity and feminism, between human sexuality and bestial and homosexual behavior, between animals and men, between God and mankind. The atheization of culture leads to chaos and death.

Italian philosopher Augusto Del Noce drew our attention to this progressive atheization of Western civilization, noting that the West has, in the past century, overcome its two totalitarian rivals, Nazism and communism, as "religious systems," but not as systems of organized atheism. In fact, for Del Noce, the victory of the West over its totalitarian rivals has led to a radical reinforcement of its inherently atheistic orientation. This is seen in the adoption of rampant materialism (what Del Noce called "Western opulence") as a universal way of life.

Even the churches—by their rejection of the divine inspiration of the Word of God; by their exclusion of the general revelation of God through every aspect of creation; by their adoption, in a variety of ways, of the evolutionary dialectics of process theology; by their putting subjective human experience above God and His Creation—have reinforced the fundamentally atheistic tendencies of modern civilization. This rejection of all transcendence, of all ontological rooting of the affairs of men in the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Author and Maintainer of creation, is at the root of our modern totalitarianism.

Basic to all totalitarianism is the loss of perception of any kind of difference between the temporal and the spiritual. This distinction is marked in the Western political tradition by the distinction between the material sword (our penal law) applied by the state when it accomplishes its divinely ordained mandate, and the spiritual sword, the definition of justice and truth, contained in the Law of God taught by the Church. In the past, this confusion had come either from the domination of the temporal by the spiritual (caesaropapism), or the domination of the spiritual by the temporal (Erastianism, in all its forms). But our time has discovered an even more radical form of the abolition of that spiritual element in society: the seduction and penetration of the Church of God by that very spirit of error and injustice which it was instituted to dispel. To the extent that the Church has disappeared as a significant force for truth, charity, and justice by its betrayal of its Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, it has ceased to be a light to a world engulfed in darkness and salt to a rotting earth. It then disappears into insignificance: "It is good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13).

St. Paul, in 2 Thessalonians, addresses the question of the totalitarian West in his account of the Antichrist. He sees two elements heralding the apparition of the Antichrist. The first is drawn from the very name of the final enemy of God: He is *anomos*, the lawless one. He is the representative of a fundamental antinomianism, a rejection of God's Law. No doubt his antinomian system will include a certain rule of law—no society can exist without law—but this "law" will be in constant contradiction to the specific moral demands of the commandments of God. Such laws would include the legalization of abortion and euthanasia; the legitimization of so-called homosexual "marriages"; the contempt for any kind of binding legal obligation; the dissolution of marriage and the establishment of "sexual satisfaction" as the social norm; the encouragement of debt at the expense of savings . . . Such antinomianism, already rampant in Western society, is encouraged and recommended by our antinomian governments.

The other element which must precede the advent of the Antichrist is what St. Paul calls "apostasy," which literally means the changing of one's position. Here, it is the abandonment of the Catholic, Apostolic, Orthodox biblical faith. A general apostasy is an observable phenomenon throughout the formerly Christian West. In Europe, it takes the shape of the emptying of churches. Elsewhere, the churches remain full, but the void, the spiritual emptiness, has all too often taken up its lodging in the minds and lives of those who attend such religious ceremonies. Everywhere, we see

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experience opposed to doctrine; freedom, to law; emotion, to the commandments of God; subjective criticism, to the objective authority of the Bible; arrogant innovations, to humble submission to the Word of God. Men refuse their God-given responsibilities, and women are illegitimately exalted to positions of authority. Finally, we see the arrogant substitution of illusions, dreams, prophesies, and visions to the written, inspired, and infallible Word of God.

Now St. Paul, in this text, indicates that an obstacle will, for a time, prevent the advent of the Antichrist. The text does not explicitly define the nature of this obstacle, but it is easy to deduce its character. The outward application of the law to the public domain is the affair of the magistrate. The public exercise of piety is the affair of the Church. What our text tells us is that the time will be ripe for the advent of the Antichrist when the state has radically separated itself from justice, from the application of God's Law to the ills of society, and when the Church has forsaken orthodox piety, both in its life and in the public worship it renders unto God. When these two factors appear in combination, then it is time to read the writing on the wall! Then the legitimate state will have been replaced by a satanic beast and the Bride of Christ turned into a prostitute. The evil alliance between these aberrant factors will then take its stand against all who hold to true piety and who fear to offend God's Holy Law.

In a parallel passage of Scripture, Revelation 8, St. John shows us the true character of this beast. We find ourselves in the presence of three strange animals: a Dragon, a Beast coming up from the sea, and another Beast, similar to the first, but coming out of the earth. The Dragon, we are told, is the Devil. In opposition to the normal two-tier spiritual structure of power (God and the authority to whom He delegates His power), we here have a three-tier political structure: the Dragon; the first Beast, which holds its power from the Dragon; and the second Beast, which acts on the authority of the first and in its presence. So all three are contemporaneous in their action.

Throughout Scripture, the image of the Beast is applied to huge empires which, in their pretension to absolute power, place their sovereign authority above that of God himself. These are political systems with totalitarian pretensions. It is interesting to note that, in Hitler's thinking, the normal structures of state power, with its limitations and controls and the traditional exercise of justice, were in fact considered as "moral" obstacles to the exercise of the absolute power of the party and of the führer. Rousseau's General Will also stands above the normal, God-given institutions of society. In the communist system, real power is the domain of the organs of the party, which act within all the legal institutions through the *noyau dirigeant*, their "directing core," made up of men totally subservient to the party, from which they take all their orders. The biblical Beasts symbolize this anti-Christian power structure. The empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, of the Medes and Persians, of Alexander the Great and the Roman Empire all, to various degrees, fit into this category. Thus also, and here equally in varying degrees, do the modern attempts at world conquest, from the medieval papacy and empire, to the empires of the Habsburgs, Napoleon, the British, the Germans, the Russians and, today, the Americans.

Every day, it is becoming more evident that the great power of the 20th century was neither that of the British or French Empires, nor that of Germany or Russia (whatever their pretentions to universal power may have been) nor that of the nascent European Union, incapable as yet of any kind of coherent and independent policy. The really great power today is that of the United States of America. It is also abundantly clear that the control of this nation has been taken over by an oligarchic clique, at least from the inception of the Federal Reserve System in 1913. The distinction between the real country and the occupied country is plain for anyone who has eyes to see.

With the semi-public Davos Conference (established in 1978) and with the speeches of President Bush in favor of a New World Order, these men have begun to come out of the closet. It is becoming a matter of public knowledge that such secret organizations are the true source of the power of our visible political institutions. And from those who have left these organizations and recounted what they have witnessed, we learn that at the center of these abominable sects the Devil himself manifests his will and communicates his power. These are the citadels of Satan, the assemblies of the Devil, to which St. John refers in Rev. 2:9 and 2:13. The wiles of the prince of this world have come to be recognized. But what is equally plain is that every attempt to oppose this growth of totalitarian power has resulted in defeat and failure. Why? How are we then to resist and overcome such a system of unlimited and uncontrolled power?

Politics is nothing if not a struggle for power, the greater power being always, in the long run, victorious. We know that Jesus Christ at the Cross overcame all the powers of Hell. We also know that all power in Heaven and on earth has been given Him by His Father. We know that the faithful Church has received custody of this divine power, having in the accurate preaching of the Word of God the

LIBERAL ARTS

WAITER, THERE'S A RACIST IN MY SOUP

"Police in Gloucester have begun a crackdown on racial abuse in ethnic restaurants by going undercover to make sure that diners keep unpalatable opinions to themselves.

"Operation Napkin was started last week with four plain-clothes officers eating in pairs in Indian and Chinese restaurants.

"The first two days resulted in a 51-year-old man being arrested for racially aggravated harassment in an Indian restaurant. . . . Another man was overheard . . . as he mimicked an Indian waiter, but police decided that his behaviour was not bad enough to warrant prosecution. . . .

"Chief Inspector Dean Walker said: 'Racist behaviour is unacceptable. The constabulary is now taking a proactive stance in relation to racist offences rather than waiting for people to report them to us.

"'Our aim is to act in the interests of the restaurants and of other diners who are offended by racist behaviour but feel reluctant to intervene.

"'We want to encourage the reporting of racial crimes.'"

—*from "Distasteful views policed," London* Times *(March 15, 2000)*

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authority to bind and to release. It has been promised, by the One who holds in His hand all power in Heaven and on earth, that the very gates of Hell would not prevail against the divine authority of the Church. It is also said that the power which dwells in individual Christians—the very power of our Lord Jesus Christ—is greater than that which dwells in the world and that if Christians come near to God and resist the Devil, the latter will be forced to flee from their very presence.

Then why such defeat, such disarray in our ranks, such lamentable weakness? Is it because the power that God has entrusted to us has become nullified by our spiritual, doctrinal, moral, and political compromises? Has God been silent in our midst for so long because we have so largely forsaken Him? Have we—despite our pretensions to faithfulness—gone over to the enemy, become so much his friend that we no longer even have the desire to fight him?

Let us return to God, to simple faith in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to a persevering faith and obedience in his inspired Word, in every aspect of our thought, our actions, and our emotions, both in our personal lives and in our public obligations. Let us strive to clean our churches of all that dishonors God's Holy Name and drive out of our pulpits and denominational administrations those who have encrusted themselves into positions of self-serving ecclesiastical power. And then we shall find restored in our midst not our own power—God forbid!—but God's irresistible might. This restoration of Almighty God to His rightful position of authority will also restore true and irresistible power and authority to the forces of good in our nations; this restoration of God's Church in our land will affect every aspect of the life of our societies; even in the political and military fields, we shall see that the powers of evil, which, for far too long, have occupied posts of illegitimate authority in our nations, will be forced to flee before the Word of Almighty God put into practice by the obedience of his faithful people.

May our mighty God, the God of battles, Whom we have the honor and great privilege to serve, have mercy on us all and accomplish in us, and through us, for His sole glory, this mighty work to His eternal praise.

Jean-Marc Berthoud is a Calvinist theologian and bookstore owner from Switzerland.

HUMOR

Five Minutes With Governor Bush

by Clyde Wilson

Through the good offices of a friend who is a large contributor to Republican causes, Chronicles *was able to secure a brief exclusive interview with George W. Bush—the likely next President of the United States. We caught up with Governor Bush in Des Moines a few minutes before he was to address the annual joint convention of the Midwestern Association of Funeral Directors and the Funeral Cosmetologists of America.*

Chronicles: Governor Bush, you have promised tax cuts. Many people remember your father's famous promise of "no new taxes" and may be afraid that such promises can't or won't be kept. A related concern is that the middle- and working-class incomes are declining while the rich are getting richer.

George W. Bush: America is the land of opportunity for everybody. We have to cut taxes to make sure people take advantage of the great entrepreneurial opportunities—like oil, and baseball, for instance.

C: Many Americans feel deeply that abortion is a sin and a crime and that its widespread acceptance is a sign of a sick society.

B: I am deeply concerned about abortion. That is why I passed a parental notification law in Texas that is a model for the nation—to make sure teenagers notify their parents when they're going to have an abortion—and *vice versa*.

C: Many Americans are concerned about the militarization of the federal police and incidents such as Ruby Ridge, during your father's administration, and Waco, which happened in your state. Do you think measures should be taken to identify those responsible and punish them, and to restrain such incidents in the future?

B: I am the law-and-order candidate. As President, I will make sure the police have all the tools they need to handle dangerous criminals. When I am President, you won't have dangerous bigots like this John Rocker prowling the streets shooting off his mouth. He makes me sick. I wish we could have him at Yale for just one week, but he probably couldn't pass the entrance exam.

And I want to assure my friend Charlton Heston and members of the NRA that I admire the Bill of Rights, and when I am President there will not be a lot of bad people owning guns who are not NRA members.

C: Governor, nearly everybody realizes that public education is failing. Is it possible that the problem is too much federal intervention and that the government ought to cut back its involvement?

B: I will be the Education President. I will make sure all our teachers are held to high standards and all our students have equal opportunity to the highest quality education so that they are prepared to be part of the global economy in the New World Order—which, by the way, my Dad invented.

C: Governor, our readers feel that American military intervention in foreign situations has been too frequent and aggressive and that we ought to scale back toward a national interest policy.

B: I am a conservative, a bold, compassionate conservative. America must always be ready when democracy is threatened anywhere in the world—like those people that invaded Albania. As President Kennedy said, you must bear any burden.

C: Many people are concerned about the high levels of immigration, as well as apparently unrestricted illegal immigration, which may be drastically changing our country. Do you think one million immigrants a year is too many, not enough, or about right?

B: America is a nation of immigrants. We need immigrants with their talents and skills to take advantage of those entrepreneurial opportunities that I said before. That is why I sponsored bilingual education in Texas—to help all those immigrants we need to have a strong, healthy economy.

C: Many of our readers are concerned

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about what could be called judicial tyranny, that the federal courts have usurped the role of the people and lawmakers in deciding major issues. How do you feel about that?

B: I am the bold conservative candidate for compassionate conservatism! I will appoint great Republican Supreme Court justices like Earl Warren, Harry Brennan, Clarence Blackmun and Ruth Bader O'Connor. And I will make sure we have diversity on the Court.

At this point, we were interrupted by staff members reminding the governor of his next engagement.

C: Thank you, Governor. This has been most enlightening for our readers.

B: Remember to tell them I am the conservative candidate, the true, the bold, the compassionate conservative. That's how we will win the Republican victory.

Clyde Wilson is a professor of American history at the University of South Carolina.

FILM

Observing American Decencies

by George McCartney

Joe Gould's Secret

Produced by First Cold Press and October Films
Directed by Stanley Tucci
Screenplay by Howard A. Rodman, from an article by Joseph Mitchell
Released by October Films

American Psycho

Produced by Single Cell Pictures
Directed by Mary Harron
Screenplay by Mary Harron, from a novel by Bret Easton Ellis
Released by Lions Gate Films

Joe Gould's Secret is an unforced, unhurried narrative filled with the quiet strangeness of a Henry James' story. Stanley Tucci, the film's producer, director, and co-star, renders events so that they seem as equivocal as life itself. Only slowly do we realize this is a tale of a soul's possession.

The film is based on two articles published by *New Yorker* staff writer Joseph Mitchell in 1942 and 1964. Both concern his acquaintance with Joe Gould, a well-known Greenwich Village eccentric. (Tucci plays Mitchell and Ian Holm, Gould. As in Tucci's 1996 film, *The Big Night*, they are perfect together.) Other than being descendants of families dating back to pre-Revolutionary America, the two men could not have been more dissimilar. Gould was a raucous, bumptious braggart from Massachusetts, a Yankee self-promoter; Mitchell, a refined, courtly gentleman from North Carolina, an unassuming Southern aristocrat.

Mitchell encountered Gould in the late 30's while publishing a series of profiles on New York characters. He was having a cup of coffee in a diner when Gould came bustling in with his trademark pasteboard folder and oversized, filthy, hand-me-down clothes. Without as much as a hello to the proprietor, the bald, bearded derelict demanded to be fed for free. Served a bowl of soup, Gould proceeded to empty a bottle of ketchup into it. At the other end of the counter, Mitchell watched, his journalistic antennae aquiver.

He soon learned that Gould had graduated from Harvard in 1911 and had come to New York to be a journalist. Instead, he had gained notoriety on the streets of Greenwich Village as the genius bum whose work in progress, *The Oral History of Our Time*, might one day turn out to be a masterpiece. At nine million words and counting, Gould grandly compared his work to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. He had been at it since 1917, he explained, the year he had fully committed himself to his project.

> I would spend the rest of my life going about the city listening to people—eavesdropping, if necessary—and writing down whatever I heard them saying that sounded revealing to me, no matter how boring or idiotic or vulgar or obscene it might sound to others. . . . I decided right then and there that I couldn't possibly continue to hold my job, because it would take up time that I should devote to the Oral History.

Mitchell was hooked. Gould's project bore a remarkable resemblance to his own, but on a far more vast scale. Then he read some of its chapters, which Gould had inscribed in dime composition books. Disappointingly, he found them to be largely the alcoholic vaporings of a would-be social philosopher, sprinkled with a promising sentence here and there. They were clearly the work of an educated man, but they were neither unique nor professional. Yet Gould had managed to have a few extracts published in little magazines such as the influential *Dial*. So Mitchell asked to see the rest. Gould, however, could not or would not produce any other manuscripts. Instead, he proposed to recite them from memory, assuring Mitchell he had "what the psychologists call total recall."

The wonder is that Mitchell believed in *The Oral History* at all. Ultimately, he concluded what we can tell quite early on in the film: Gould was a megalomaniacal con artist. For nearly 40 years, he fed his stomach and his vanity by trading on the reputation of a couple of dozen essays, the supposed selections from his *magnum opus*.

Gould was an extreme specimen of a type: the professional raconteur one can meet in any bar and grill across our intemperate land. He told an endless stream of stories and anecdotes with preternatural panache. He had measured the heads of a thousand Chippewa Indians, "the only civilized people left," he would routinely claim. He had learned to speak with seagulls and would waddle and mew to show how it was done. Gould had the Ancient Mariner's glittering eye and incantatory voice. But this kind of act can charm only so long. When the eye dims and the voice falters, the stage-managing ego in the wings becomes all too visible. It is never pleasant to witness such an unmasking. Certainly, Mitchell felt no satisfaction when he finally saw through Gould's imposture to the naked, childish appetite for attention behind it. Such a revelation in others has a discomfiting way of mirroring our own deluded self-importance. In perhaps the film's most powerful moment, Gould himself gets a glimpse in this mirror. As he sits alone on a subway car grimly writing about the difficulty of distinguishing the sane from the insane, we hear him in voice-over saying, "I have a delusion of

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grandeur. I believe myself to be Joe Gould." His summing up of our common affliction is succinct and devastating.

Mitchell wrote "Joe Gould's Secret" in 1964, seven years after Gould died. He would never publish anything again. He continued to report to his office at the *New Yorker* for 32 years until his death in 1996, nearly the same length of time Gould had haunted the Village. His colleagues heard him typing behind his closed door, but nothing emerged. It's a strange conclusion. Tucci doesn't try to dramatize it—how could he? He merely states it in a closing paragraph against a black screen and lets us draw our own conclusions. Was it guilt? Having propelled Gould to his little perch of fame from which he inevitably tumbled, did Mitchell feel he didn't have the right to intrude on other lives? Or did Mitchell come to recognize in Gould's self-aggrandizement a shocking semblance of his own neediness?

The film does offer some clues, and one seems particularly apt. The always-importunate Gould calls at two in the morning. Mitchell's wife answers and, turning to him, announces, "It's your Mr. Gould." Mitchell grumbles, "He's not mine." To which she replies, "Well, you're his." James would have appreciated this multileveled irony.

The 69-year-old Holm is superb as Gould. In lesser hands, the role could have easily devolved into just another portrait of a lovable rogue. Instead, Holm shows the man to have been as boorish as he was charming. He makes you understand that, at 60, Gould remained a brat, wholly unwilling to acknowledge the rights of others. Tucci has the more difficult assignment. As the diffident, kindly Mitchell, he must restrict himself to reacting to Gould. He does so with a subtlety that goes beyond acting. His attentive, ever respectful gentleness makes you mourn for a decency that has passed out of our world.

Speaking of decency, we come to *American Psycho*. Had Joe Gould arrived in Manhattan 65 years later than he did, he would have found none at all, according to director Mary Harron. Instead, an investment banker would have dispatched this jobless parasite with a few flourishes of a Henckels carving knife, carefully wielded so as not to bloody his Armani overcoat.

In the 1980's, it seems, hordes of Harvard Business School graduates descended like Goths upon Gotham, shoving the weak to the wall. They were pumped on steroids, cocaine, and boundless entitlement. When not pleased with services rendered, these heartless louts would casually threaten harm to their servants, doormen, house cleaners, waiters, limousine drivers, and, last but perhaps not least, their women. Then one of them, Patrick Bateman (Christian Bale), takes the next logical step. He rapes, murders, disembowels, and dismembers merely to assure himself he's top dog.

Harron clearly intends her adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis's nauseating novel to be a leftist-feminist critique of American capitalism. This is ironic, since, from the moment the credits roll, she capitalizes on the novel's scandal value. The film begins with red droplets falling one by one against an entirely white screen. Anyone at all acquainted with the novel will assume this is blood from a freshly carved corpse. When the camera pulls back, however, we see the droplets are really raspberry syrup being drizzled onto a plate to decorate a haute cuisine concoction in a tony restaurant. At nearby tables, impossibly tidy waiters intone the evening's specials to bored yuppies. "Tonight we're serving a swordfish meatloaf with a marmalade of lime and papaya." The image of dripping blood, however, lingers in our minds. These gilded youth are not just ordering a meal; they are cannibalizing the lower orders who are forced to serve their pampered appetites.

This is one idea of both the film's and the novel's and it's repeated incessantly. The privileged live at the expense of the less materially fortunate, who are reduced to wholly expendable commodities, things to be used and discarded.

Well, yes. No doubt wealth and the lack of it can and has corrupted social relations. Jonathan Swift said as much in his 1729 essay, "A Modest Proposal," in which a lordly reformer counsels cannibalism to alleviate the Irish problem. But Ellis obviously felt his readers needed something stronger than Swift. He has Bateman turn his fashionable apartment into a private brothel and amateur abattoir: pornographic sex followed by torture murders, both described with an obsessive attention to anatomical detail. This is more than a cynical bid to stir controversy and boost sales. Ellis clearly relishes Bateman's use of knives, nail guns, power saws, and drills on young women.

Ellis has been hailed as his generation's spokesman. Perhaps he is. His vision is the grim, ineluctable terminus of a steady diet of our popular culture with its endless pornographic merchandising. Appetites fed to excess always end up in self-lacerating disgust.

The only thing to be said for Harron's film is that it leaves out almost all of the novel's graphic carnage, making do with suggestion instead. As for the sex, it's rendered briefly but explicitly enough to reveal why Harron was drawn to the novel. These scenes display sex as a joyless exercise of male power over women. So we don't miss the point, she has Bateman flex his biceps in his mirrored walls as two prostitutes serve his needs. Who says feminists aren't subtle?

Belatedly, we discover Bateman's murders may be no more than hallucinations. This is, I suppose, another attempt to make sure we get the point. Really, folks, this ain't no horror story; it's a sure-enough sophisticated allegory of capitalist decadence. I wonder. Would Ellis and Harron be as willing to use their metaphorical carnage in a narrative about the former Soviet Union, where making the communist omelet required breaking some 22 million eggs?

The *pièce de résistance* comes in the final scene. Bateman and his banker buddies are drinking in a cocktail lounge as an overhead television runs a tape of Ronald Reagan addressing the Iran-Contra issue. The young men jeer and snicker at his image.

That's right. Ronald Reagan did it. His hypocrisy deprived an entire generation of rich boys and girls of their innate moral idealism. He made them materialistic predators. It wasn't their absentee parents, their soulless education, their exposure to a steadily coarsening culture. It wasn't the constant counsel to serve yourself first and enjoy as much no-fault sex as early and as often and as promiscuously as possible. It wasn't the insistent assurance that inconvenient babies could be aborted with little or no consequence. No, it was those nasty conservatives who transformed these hapless innocents into monsters of greed and hedonism.

I confess I was puzzled. Curiously enough, Bateman's ungentlemanly behavior and sordid fantasies reminded me of another, much younger resident of the White House.

George McCartney teaches English at St. John's University.

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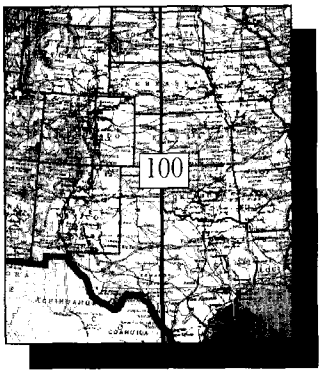
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

The Phantom Horse



"What does 'AQHA 1990 gelding, bred Actual Spark' mean?"

"It means someone has a neutered ten-year-old American quarterhorse, sired by Actual Spark, for sale. Why?"

Rhonda looked up from the *Casper Star-Tribune* she held spread in her lap.

"I want to buy a horse."

"What sense does that make? You're moving back to California in less than two months."

"I'll take him with me. Horses aren't just for Wyoming rednecks, you know."

"Well, if you're going to buy a horse, for God's sake don't get a quarterhorse."

"I'd rather have an Arab, like Star and Larki."

"Good luck finding an A-rab for sale in Wyoming."

"Why is that?"

"Because they're as tough to sell as surfboards here. That's why."

"I don't get what you're telling me, dude."

"A lot of Arabs are too small to rope a cow from, let alone a bull. And even if they weren't, they look funny. In addition to being A-rabs, of course."

"People in Wyoming are so dumb."

I removed the cylinder pin from the .41 magnum revolver I was cleaning and ran a copper brush dipped in solvent through the barrel.

"Here's an Arabian for sale." She turned the paper halfway round so I could read the ad. "It says she's a six-year-old mare, experienced as a cutting horse. What's a cutting horse?"

"Means she's trained to cut a single cow out of a herd. What are they asking for her?"

"Thirteen hundred dollars."

"That sounds like a good price to me. Better than you'd find in California, probably. Even with gas prices at two dollars a gallon, you'd come out ahead towing her all the way to Sonoma or wherever it is you're going."

"This horse's name is Sassy," Rhonda said.

"Sounds like a match-up to me. Let's have the number and I'll call over to Torrington right now."

We started for Torrington, 120 miles to the northeast across the Laramie Mountains, at ten o'clock Saturday morning. I wanted to bring Babe the Australian sheepdog along in the back of the truck, but Rhonda was afraid he might bite someone or run the horses, so we left him at home instead. She sat on the end of the bench seat by the window, Micaela seven years old between us with her journal and a blue crayon to write with. It was a splendid morning in mid-April, the sky a shiny blue overhead, the greening plain spreading west to the blue mountains outlined by shining snowfields. Not least lovely were Micaela in her blue jeans, bandana handkerchief, and red cowboy boots from Corral West, Rhonda with her blonde hair streaked in mahogany undertones, tawny skin, and intent brown eyes.

"You look especially lovely today, my ladies."

"Thank *you*!"

It's hard to make a compliment sound convincing to a woman who already knows she deserves it.

Rhonda dozed down through Sybill Canyon, her right temple against the sunwarmed window glass, while Micaela rehearsed her Andrea Marcovicci repertoire ("little green garden / little white gate / where a girl loves to wait / watching and yearning for someone's returning"), including every imagined facial expression, in a well-meant attempt at distracting my attention from the monotony of the two-lane road precariously tracing the cutbank above the sharply winding creek. We stopped at the Game and Fish Wildlife Center to observe a yearling moose, a flock of wild turkeys, and schools of brown trout flicking upstream away from our towering shadows and the massive tramp of our footfalls on the undercut bank.

"I've never seen a moose in the wild before," Rhonda marveled.

"Hideous to behold, aren't they? Like a horse designed by the U.S. Post Office."

The highway, after descending among lava domes and turrets, broke finally into golden lowlands dominated by rugged hills and the pouring wind breaking through from the Laramie Plains, 3,000 feet above beyond the western slope of the mountains. The canyon widened, and cattle dotted the broad yellow bottoms on either side of the meandering river lined by webby gray cottonwood trees.

"If this horse is ugly I'm going to be really bummed," Rhonda remarked, waking again. "Micaela, don't interrupt us when we're talking!"

"I'm expecting to find she's a very good horse," I said.

"You're such a freak, Micaela. What are you writing? 'Mom is cool.' Oh, how sweet. I really want her to be nice, you know?"

Near Wheatland I got us lost briefly, trying to get to Lingle by the back roads. Backtracking to Interstate 25, we continued south a few miles to Chugwater, then east again to Hawk Springs. This was extreme southeastern Wyoming, pushing against the Nebraska border: wheatfields broken in places by eroding clay bluffs and mesas and dominated by the dark triangular form of Laramie Peak standing in the west, eastward an oceanic horizon shading away against the pale blue of the afternoon sky. The time was 12:15. We were a quarter of an hour late already, and 36 miles from Lingle still.

"You brought your cell phone along, didn't you? Thank God for Californians with their newfangled gadgets when you need them. Call Dawn and tell her we'll be at her place in under 40 minutes, would you please?"

Rhonda took the phone from the door pocket, dialed the number, and handed the thing across Micaela, now in the middle of an Eddie Murphy routine, to me.

"*You* tell her, dude. You're the one that's talked with her before."

At Lingle, a town of a few hundred or so people 18 miles from the Nebraska

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line on Highway 26 coming up from Scottsbluff, I spent my first night in Wyoming 23 years ago, traveling with my pardner Ted Kovaleff of New York City. Together we burned a couple of thick steaks on a portable grill set up behind the motel and ate them with beefsteak tomatoes and Beefeater gin, while the May-green bluffs along the North Platte River turned gold, then purple, with evening and meadowlarks warbled from the leafing cottonwoods around the town square. At the time, I was thrilled to set foot in the Cowboy State. Nearly a quarter of a century later, I barely recognized the place as Wyoming, my home of 21 years: You might as well be in Alliance, Nebraska, as here.

At the rock shop midway between Torrington and Lingle, we turned left across the Union Pacific tracks and followed the narrow road over the North Platte to the south bank of the river. The Hathaway place was a small frame single-story farmhouse, not quite of the pioneer era, behind a windbreak of tall cottonwood trees looking as if they might be beginning to rot out the way old cottonwoods do and surrounded by hundreds of acres of harrowed dusty fields not yet planted to crops. I recognized the red 20-year-old Chevy dually parked on the turnaround Dawn had said to look for and turned in there. A tow-headed seven- or eight-year-old watching from the other side of the Chevy introduced himself as Maverick, adding that his mother was in the house. "Micaela—get your boots on!" Rhonda ordered.

Farm wives and ranching ones aren't always housekeepers, especially those with enough else to do. Dawn Hathaway, greeting us from a cross-legged position on the floor with a bottle-feeding baby in her lap and a couple of toddlers hanging around, obviously had more than enough. Glancing sideways at Rhonda, I saw her tuck a loose strand of hair behind one ear. "Rob will be back in a moment to take the baby, and then I can show you the horse," Dawn said.

Rob Hathaway was a tall young man wearing a farmer's cap, jeans and workboots, and a T-shirt with fishing flies on the chest. A native of Oklahoma, he had a job at a slaughterhouse in town to supplement the income he made from tenant farming. Dawn took a bridle from a peg behind the door and led the way to the corral, which had three horses standing in it. One was a tall, very large-boned buckskin quarterhorse, about 17 hands and weighing maybe 1,300 pounds. Of the other two, the larger was a handsome gray half-Arab gelding, well-built at 15 hands, the smaller a bay mare with delicate bones and a lean barrel, not over 13 hands in height and looking more like a yearling colt than a six-year-old cowpony. I like smaller horses myself, but have friends larger than me to mount in elk season and for pack expeditions.

The mare came willingly enough. Dawn fitted the bit, slipped the headstall over the ears, and saddled her with a lightweight, comfortable-looking rig. The horse was moving out already as she stepped up, which can lose you points or even disqualify you in competition, but saves time under working conditions. Her springy ankles gave her an easy trot, her canter looked smooth as a rocking horse, and I had to admire her quickness in crossing over, in the turn and backup, and changing leads. When Dawn had finished putting the mare through her paces, she slipped down from the saddle and handed the reins to me. Slightly barn-sour from winter, and unused as well to an unfamiliar rider, she stepped on my foot before I could get up, but performed well otherwise, except for a bit of crowhopping when I tried to back her.

"Your turn," I told Rhonda when I was on the ground again.

"No. I don't think so. She didn't seem to want you on her."

"Go ahead, now. It's you who wants to buy a horse."

No competitive athlete backs down from a challenge. Rhonda brushed past me and snatched the reins from my hands, turned the stirrup as I'd instructed her to do months before, gripped the cantle with her right hand, and sprang up to the saddle. While Dawn and I watched, she worked Sassy through in the corral until horse and rider appeared to feel comfortable with one another.

"Where's Micaela?" I asked Rhonda when she surrendered the mare at last.

"Over there by the haystack playing with Dawn's kids."

"She's not interested in the horse?"

"You can see she's not interested."

There's a New England saying about women having three stages: Horses, men, and religion. In today's overheated society, it's refreshing to know a seven-year-old who hasn't come to the first one yet.

Dawn unsaddled Sassy and turned her loose in the corral while Rhonda called Micaela to her, promising to phone when she'd made a decision about the horse. "It's nice to find someone who's at least *interested* in Arabs," Dawn remarked, wistfully.

The light was sharply angled in the springtime valley of the North Platte as we started west again, through Lingle, Fort Laramie, Guernsey, and Dwyer.

"I took my cue from you the whole time," Rhonda said. "I could see from your face how disappointed you were when you first saw that horse."

"She's pretty small. But also strong and beautifully quick and well trained. If you don't want her, maybe I'll buy her myself."

"Do you think she'd make a good horse for me?"

"Yes, I think so. Sassy's an athlete, absolutely. Just like you."

"I feel so sad," Rhonda said. "I don't want to talk about it anymore."

Past Guernsey the road climbed out of the river bottom onto a wide tableland from where the Laramie Range, backlit by the setting sun, stretched like shark's teeth along the western horizon.

"I'm going to miss Wyoming," she went on. "I wish I could have seen more of it before I left."

"I never thought I'd hear you say it. You've been bellyaching about Wyoming for the past ten months—as long as I've known you."

"I wish I could turn my horse in with yours. We could ride whenever we wanted and go up in the mountains together."

"That would be wonderful. But you're going home to California in two months. You won't give Wyoming another thought once you're back there."

"If I find a horse I like in California, will you come out and look it over for me first?"

"I might. We'll have to see."

"Oh," Rhonda exclaimed, "this is such a f----d-up situation!"

"You've decided against buying the horse after all?"

"I told you," she said. "I don't want to talk about the horse." c

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Introduction by Herman Belz

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Herman Belz is Professor of History at the University of Maryland, and the author most recently of *A Living Constitution or Fundamental Law?: American Constitutionalism in Historical Perspective* and *Abraham Lincoln, Constitutionalism, and Equal Rights During the Civil War Era.*

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